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EMANCIPATION :

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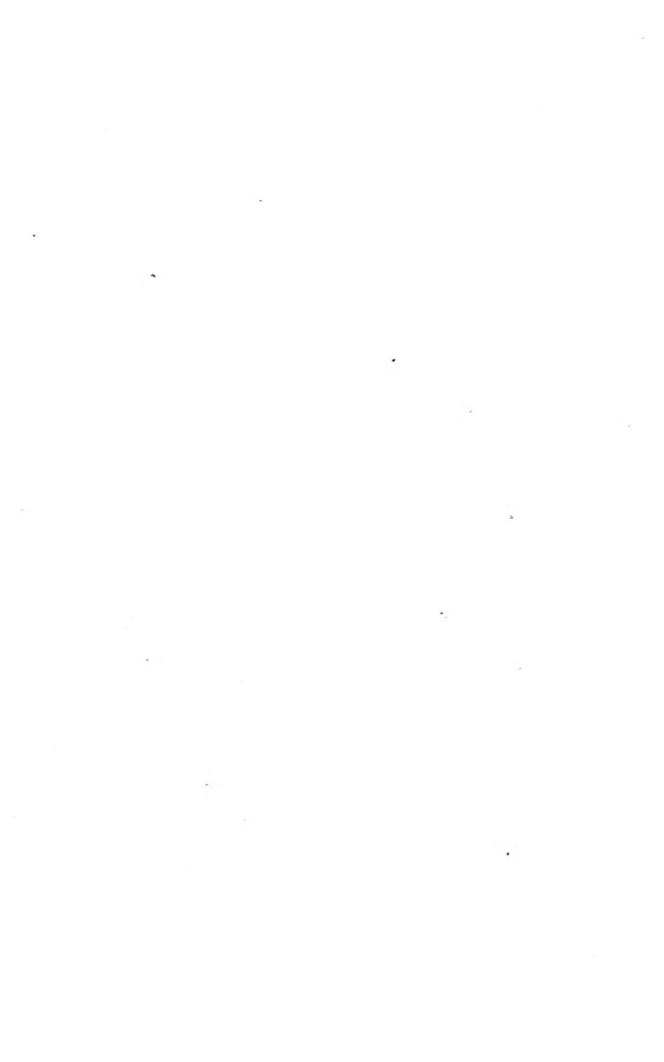
WILLIAM E. CHANNING.





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EMANCIPATION:

BY

WILLIAM E. CHANNING.

BOSTON:

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

THE following tract grew almost insensibly out of the strong impressions received from recent accounts of the emancipated British Islands. Joseph John Gurney, well known among us as a member and minister of the Quaker denomination, was so kind as to visit me after his return from the West Indies, and then transmitted to me his "Familiar Letters to Henry Clay,"* describing a winter in those regions. The satisfaction which I felt was so great, that I could not confine it to myself. I began to write, as a man begins to talk after hearing good news. Many thoughts, connected with the topic, rushed successively into my mind; and gradually, and with little labor, this slight work took the form it now wears. I am encouraged to hope that it is of some little value from the spontaneousness of its growth.

This tract was prepared for the press some time ago, and should have been published immediately after the appearance of Mr. Gurney's letters. But I was discouraged by the preoccupation of the minds of the whole community with the politics of the day. I was obliged to wait for the storm to pass; and I now send it forth in the hope, that some at least

* The book is entitled "Familiar Letters to Henry Clay of Kentucky, describing a Winter in the West Indies. By Joseph John Gurney."

are at leisure to give me a short hearing. Not that I expect to be heard very widely. No one knows, more than I do, the want of popularity of the subject. Multitudes would think it a waste of time to give their thoughts to this great question of justice and humanity. But still there are not a few to whom the truth will be welcome. Such will find, that in these pages I am not going again over the ground which I have already travelled; and I hope they will feel, that, having begun with "Slavery," I am fitly ending with "Emancipation."

The latter part of the tract discusses a topic, which I have occasionally touched on, but which needs a more full exposition, and on which I have long wished to communicate my views. The Duties of the Free States, in regard to Slavery, need to be better understood, and my suggestions I hope will be weighed with candor. As I have taken little interest for years in the politics of the day, and as my hope for the country rests not on any party, but solely on our means of education, and on moral and religious influences, I ought not to be accused of wishing to give a political aspect to the anti-slavery cause. I am very unwilling, that it should take the form of a struggle for office and power. Still it has political relations; and of these I shall speak with perfect freedom. The topic is an exciting one; but as I look at it with perfect calmness, I hope I shall not disturb the minds of others.

November 15, 1840.

EMANCIPATION.

AT length a report of West Indian Emancipation has reached us, to which some heed will be given ; and it is so cheering, that I should be glad to make it more extensively known. We have had, already, faithful and affecting accounts of this great social revolution ; but coming from men, who bear an unpopular name, they have received little attention. Here we have the testimony of a man in no way connected with American Abolitionists. In his long residence among us, Mr. Garney has rather shunned this party, whether justly or wisely I do not say. The fact is stated, simply to prevent or remove a prejudice from which he ought not to suffer. He came to this country on no mission from the enemies of slavery in his own land. Nor did he come as so many travellers do, to gather or invent materials for a marketable book ; but to preach the gospel in obedience to what he thought “ a heavenly call.” In this character he visited many parts of our land, and every where secured esteem as a man, and won no

small attention to his religious teachings. After many labors here, he felt himself charged with a divine message to the West Indies. His first object in travelling over those islands was to preach; but in his various journies and communications with individuals, he naturally opened his eyes and ears to the subject, which there engrosses almost every thought, and in which his own philanthropy gave him special interest. In his "Letters" he furnishes us with the details and a few results of his observation, interspersed with some personal adventure, and with notices of the natural appearances and productions of regions so new and striking to an Englishman. The book has the merit of perfectly answering its end, which is not to reason about emancipation, but to make the reader a spectator, and to give him facts for his own reflection. It is written with much ease, simplicity, clearness, and sometimes, with beauty. It is especially distinguished by a spirit of kindness. It not only expresses a sincere Christian philanthropy, but breathes a good humor which must disarm even the most prejudiced. They who have refused to read anti-slavery productions because steeped in gall, will find no bitter ingredients here. Not that there is a spirit of compromise or timidity in our author. He is a thoroughly kind-hearted man, and conscientiously believes that he can best serve the cause of truth and

liberty by giving free utterance to his own benignant spirit. The book has not only the substantial merit of fidelity on a subject of immense importance, but another claim, which may operate more widely in its favor. It is entertaining. It does not give us dull and dry wisdom, but the quick, animated observations of a man, who saw with his heart as well as his eyes, who took a strong interest in what he describes.

That the book is entirely impartial, I do not say. This highest merit of a book seems to require more than human virtue. To see things precisely as they are, with not a shade or coloring from our own prejudices or affections, is the last triumph of self-denial. The most honest often see what they want to see; and a man, so honored as Mr. Gurney, is very apt to be told what he wants to hear. But the book bears strong marks of truth. The uprightness of the author secures us against important error. Let even large deductions be made for his feelings, as a quaker, against slavery, for his sympathy with the negro and the negro's friends. After every allowance the great truth will come out, that the hopes of the most sanguine advocates of Emancipation have been realized, if not surpassed, in the West Indies.

Such a book is much needed. There has been in this country a backwardness, almost an unwilling-

ness, to believe good reports from the West Indies. Not a few have desired to hear evil, and have propagated so industriously every fiction or exaggeration unfavorable to freedom, that the honest and benevolent have been misled. The general state of mind among us in regard to West Indian Emancipation has been disheartening. So deadly a poison has Southern slavery infused into the opinions and feelings of the North, especially in the larger cities, that few cordial wishes for the success of Emancipation have met our ears. Stray rumors of the failure of the experiment in this or that Island have been trumpeted through the country by the newspapers, and the easy faith of the multitude has been practised on, till their sympathies with the oppressed have become blunted. I have myself seen the countenance of a man, not wanting in general humanity, brighten at accounts of the bad working of emancipation. In such a state of feeling and opinion, a book like Mr. Gurney's is invaluable. The truth is told simply, kindly; and, though it may receive little aid from our newspapers, must find its way into the hands of many honest readers. I offer a few extracts, not to take the place of the book, but in the hope of drawing to it more general attention. So various and interesting are the details, and so suited to the various prejudices and misapprehensions common in our country, that my only difficulty

is to make a selection,—to know where to stop. He first visited Tortola.

“We could not but feel an intense interest in making our first visit to a British island, peopled with emancipated negroes. Out of a population of nearly five thousand, there are scarcely more than two hundred white persons; but we heard of no inconveniences arising from this disparity. We had letters to Dr. Dyott, the Stipendiary Magistrate, and to some of the principal planters, who greeted us with a warm welcome, and soon relieved us from our very natural anxiety, by assuring us that freedom was working well in Tortola. One of our first visits was to a school for black children, under the care of Alexander Bott, the pious minister of the Parish Church. It was in good order—the children answered our questions well. We then proceeded to the jail; in which, if my memory serves me right, we found only one prisoner, with the jailor, and the judge! Our kind friend, Francis Spencer Wigley, the Chief Justice of the British Virgin Islands, happened to be there, and cheered us with the information, that crime had vastly decreased since the period of full emancipation.” p. 25.

His next visit was to St. Christopher’s.

“I mounted one of the Governor’s horses, and enjoyed a solitary ride in the country. Although it was the seventh day of the week, usually applied by the emancipated laborers, to their private purposes, I ob-

served many of them diligently at work on the cane grounds, cutting the canes for the mill. Their aspect was that of physical vigor, and cheerful contentment, and all my questions as I passed along, were answered satisfactorily. On my way, I ventured to call at one of the estates, and found it was the home of Robert Claxton, the solicitor General of the Colony, a gentleman of great intelligence and respectability. He was kind enough to impart a variety of useful, and in general, cheering, information. One fact mentioned by him, spoke volumes. Speaking of a small property on the island belonging to himself, he said, ‘Six years ago, (that is, shortly before the act of emancipation,) it was worth only £2,000, with the slaves upon it. Now, without a single slave, it is worth three times the money. I would not sell it for £6,000.’ This remarkable rise in the value of property, is by no means confined to particular estates. I was assured that, as compared with those times of depression and alarm which preceded the act of emancipation, it is at once general and very considerable. I asked the President Crook, and some other persons, whether there was a single individual on the island, who wished for the restoration of slavery. Answer, ‘Certainly not one.’ ” p. 34.

“ ‘They will do an *infinity* of work,” said one of my informants, ‘*for wages.*’

“ This state of things is accompanied by a vast increase in their own comforts. Our friend Cadman, the Methodist minister, was on this station, during

slavery, in the year 1826. He has now returned to it under freedom. ‘The change for the better,’ he observed, ‘in the dress, demeanor, and welfare of the people, is *prodigious*.’ The imports are vastly increased. The duties on them were £1,000 more in 1833, than in 1837; and in 1839, double those of 1838, within £150. This surprising increase is owing to the demand on the part of the free laborers, for imported goods, especially for articles of dress. The difficulty experienced by the gentry living in the town, in procuring fowls, eggs, &c. from the negroes, is considerably increased. The reason is well known,—the laborers make use of them for home consumption. Marriage is now become frequent amongst them, and a profusion of eggs is expended on their wedding cakes! Doubtless they will soon learn to exchange these freaks of luxury, for the gradual acquisition of wealth.” p. 36.

He next visited Antigua.

“Our company was now joined by Nathaniel Gilbert, an evangelical clergyman of the church of England, and a large proprietor and planter on the island. Both he and Sir William, the Governor, amply confirmed our previous favorable impressions respecting the state of the colony. On my inquiring of them respecting the value of landed property, their joint answer was clear and decided. ‘At the lowest computation, the land, without a single slave upon it, is fully as valuable now, as it was, including all the slaves, before emancipation.’ In other words, the value

of the slaves is already transferred to the land. Satisfactory as is this computation, I have every reason to believe that it is much below the mark. With respect to real property in the town of St. John's, it has risen in value with still greater rapidity. A large number of new stores, have been opened; new houses are built or building; the streets have been cleared and improved; trade is greatly on the increase; and the whole place wears the appearance of progressive wealth and prosperity." p. 43.

"Extensive inquiry has led us to the conviction, that on most of the properties of Antigua, and in general throughout the West Indies, one-third only of the slaves were operative. What with childhood, age, infirmity, sickness, *sham* sickness, and other causes, full two-thirds of the negro population, might be regarded as dead weight.—The pecuniary saving, on many of the estates in Antigua, by the change of slave for free labor, is at least *thirty per cent.*" pp. 45, 46.

"We had appointed a meeting at a country village called Parham. It was a morning of violent rain; but about two hundred negroes braved the weather, and united with us in public worship. It is said that they are less willing to come out to their places of worship *in the rain*, than was the case formerly. The reason is curious. They now have *shoes and stockings*, which they are unwilling to expose to the mud." p. 47.

“It is a cheering circumstance of no small importance, that there are no less, as we were told, than *seven thousand scholars* in the various charity schools of Antigua. In all these schools the Bible is read and taught. Who can doubt the beneficial moral effect of these extensive efforts ?” p. 48.

“The vicar of St. John’s, during the last seven years of slavery, married only one hundred and ten pairs of negroes. In the single year of freedom, 1839, the number of pairs married by him, was 185.

“With respect to crime—it has been rapidly diminishing during the last few years. The numbers committed to the house of correction in 1837—chiefly for petty offences, formerly punished on the estates—were 850; in 1838 only 244; in 1839, 311. The number left in the prison at the close of 1837, was 147; at the close of 1839, only 35.

“Nor can it be doubted that the personal comforts of the laborers have been, in the mean time, vastly increased. The duties on imports in 1833, (the last year of slavery) were £13,576; in 1839, they were £24,650. This augmentation has been occasioned by the importation of dry goods and other articles, for which a demand, entirely new, has arisen among the laboring population. The quantity of bread and meat used as food by the laborers is surprisingly increased. Their wedding cakes and dinners are extravagant, even to the point, at times, of drinking champagne!

“In connection with every congregation in the

island, whether of the Church of England, or among the Dissenters, has been formed a friendly society. The laborers subscribe their weekly pittances to these institutions, and draw out comfortable supplies, in case of sickness, old age, burials, and other exigencies. Thus is the negro gradually trained to the habits of prudence and foresight."

"A female proprietor who had become embarrassed, was advised to sell off part of her property, in small lots. The experiment answered her warmest expectations. The laborers in the neighborhood, bought up all the little freeholds with extreme eagerness, made their payments faithfully, and lost no time in settling on the spots which they had purchased. They soon framed their houses, and brought their gardens into useful cultivation with yams, bananas, plantains, pine-apples, and other fruits and vegetables, including plots of sugar cane. In this way Augusta and Liberta sprang up as if by magic. I visited several of the cottages, in company with the Rector of the parish, and was surprised by the excellence of the buildings, as well as by the neat furniture, and cleanly little articles of daily use, which we found within. It was a scene of contentment and happiness; and I may certainly add, of industry: for these little freeholders occupied only their leisure hours, in working on their own grounds. They were also earning wages as laborers on the neighboring estates, or working at English Harbor, as mechanics." p. 49.

“ We were now placed in possession of clear documentary evidence, respecting the staple produce of the island. The average exports of the last five years of slavery, (1829 to 1833 inclusive,) were, sugar 12,189 hogsheads; molasses 3,308 puncheons; and rum 2,468 puncheons. Those of the first five years of freedom, (1834 to 1838 inclusive,) were, sugar 13,545 hogsheads; molasses 8,308 puncheons; and rum 1,109 puncheons: showing an excess of 1,356 hogsheads of sugar, and of 5,000 puncheons of molasses; and a diminution of 1,359 puncheons of rum. This comparison is surely a triumphant one; not only does it demonstrate the advantage derived from free labor during a course of five years, but affords a proof that many of the planters of Antigua have ceased to convert their molasses into rum. It ought to be observed that these five years of freedom included two of drought, one, very calamitous. The statement for 1839, forms an admirable climax to this account. It is as follows: sugar 22,383 hogsheads; (10,000 beyond the last average of slavery,) 13,433 puncheons of molasses; (also 10,000 beyond that average,) and only 582 puncheons of rum! That, in the sixth year of freedom, after the fair trial of five years, the exports of sugar from Antigua, almost doubled the average of the last five years of slavery, is a fact which precludes the necessity of all other evidence. By what hands was this vast crop raised and realized? By the hands of that lazy and impracticable race, (as they have often been describ-

ed,) the negroes. And under what stimulus has the work been effected? Solely under that of moderate wages." p. 53.

He next visited Dominica, of which he gives equally favorable accounts; but I hasten to make a few extracts from his notices of Jamaica, the island from which the most unfavorable reports have come, and in which the unwise and unkind measures of the proprietors, particularly in regard to rents, have done much to counteract the good influences of Emancipation.

"We were glad to observe that the day (Sunday,) was remarkably well observed at Kingston—just as it is in many of the cities of your highly favored Union. A wonderful scene we witnessed, that morning, in Samuel Oughton's Baptist Chapel, which we attended, without having communicated to the people any previous notice of our coming. The minister was so obliging as to make way for us on the occasion, and to invite us to hold our meeting with his flock, after the manner of Friends. Such a flock we had not before seen, consisting of nearly three thousand black people, chiefly emancipated slaves, attired after their favorite custom, in neat white raiment, and most respectable and orderly in their demeanor and appearance. They sat in silence with us, in an exemplary manner, and appeared both to understand, and appreciate, the doctrines of divine truth, preached on the occasion. The congregation is greatly in-

creased, both in numbers and respectability, since the date of full freedom. They pour in from the country partly on foot, and partly on mules, or horses, of their own. They now entirely support the mission, and are enlarging their chapel at the expense of £1,000 sterling. Their subscriptions to this and other collateral objects, are at once voluntary and very liberal. ‘I have brought my mite for the chapel,’ said a black woman, once a slave, to S. Oughton, a day or two before our meeting; ‘I am sorry it is no more;’ she then put into his hand, two pieces of gold, amounting to five dollars.” p. 74.

“Here it may be well to notice the fact, that the great majority of estates in Jamaica, belong to absentee proprietors, who reside in England. In Jamaica, they are placed under the care of some attorney, or representative of the owner; one attorney often undertaking the care of numerous estates. Under the attorney, is the overseer, on each particular property, on whom the management almost exclusively devolves. This state of things is extremely unfavorable to the welfare of Jamaica. If the proprietors cannot give their personal attention to their estates, it would certainly be a better plan to lease them to eligible tenants on the spot—a practice which has, of late years, been adopted in many instances. It is only surprising that estates never visited by the proprietor, and seldom by the attorney, but left to the care of inexperienced young men, often of immoral character, should prosper at all. Nor would they

prosper, even as they now do, but for two causes ; first, the exuberant bounty of nature, and secondly, the orderly, inoffensive conduct, and patient industry, of the negro race." p. 85.

"The rapid diffusion of marriage among the negroes, and the increase of it even among the white inhabitants in Jamaica, is one of the happiest results of freedom. We were assured on good authority that four times as many marriages took place, last year in Jamaica, as in an equal population, on an average, in England—a fact which proves not only that numerous new connections are formed, but also that multitudes who were formerly living as a man and wife without the right sanction, are now convinced of the sinfulness of the practice, and are availing themselves, with eagerness, of the marriage covenant. It appears that upwards of 1600 negro couples, were married in the Baptist churches alone, during the year 1839." p. 86.

"In the Parish (or *county*) of St. Mary, rent and wages have been arranged quite independently of each other, and labor has been suffered to find its market, without obstruction. The consequence is, that there have been no differences, and the people are working well. The quantity of work obtained from a freeman there, is far beyond the old task of the slave. In the laborious occupation of holing, the emancipated negroes perform double the work of the slave, in a day. In road making the day's task under slavery, was to break four barrels of stone.

Now, by task-work, a weak hand will fill eight barrels, a strong one, from ten to twelve." p. 89.

"At the Baptist station at Sligoville, we spent several hours. It is located on a lofty hill, and is surrounded by fifty acres of fertile mountain land. This property is divided into one hundred and fifty freehold lots, fifty of which had been already sold to the emancipated laborers, and had proved a timely refuge for many laborers who had been driven, by hard usage, from their former homes. Some of them had built good cottages; others, temporary huts; and others again were preparing the ground for building. Their gardens were cleared, or in process of clearing, and in many cases, already brought into fine cultivation. Not a hoe, I believe, had ever been driven into that land before. *Now*, a village had risen up, with every promise of comfort and prosperity, and the land was likely to produce a vast abundance of nutritious food. The people settled there were all married pairs, mostly with families, and the men employed the bulk of their time, in working for wages on the neighboring estates. The chapel and the school were immediately at hand, and the religious character of the people stood high. Never did I witness a scene of greater industry, or one more marked by contentment for the present, and hope for the future. How instructive to remember that two years ago, this peaceful village had no existence!" p. 90.

"On our return home we visited two neighboring

estates, of about equal size, (I believe,) and equal fertility; both, among the finest properties, for natural and local advantages, which I any where saw in Jamaica. One was in difficulty—the other all prosperity. The first was the estate already alluded to, which had been deprived of so many hands, by vain attempts to compel the labor of freemen. There, if I am not mistaken, I *saw*, as we passed by, the clear marks of that violence, by which the people had been expelled. The second, called “Dawkin’s Caymanas,” was under the enlightened attorneyship of Judge Bernard, who with his lady, and the respectable overseer, met us on the spot. On this property, the laborers were independent tenants. Their rent was settled, according to the money value of the tenements which they occupied, and they were allowed to take their labor to the best market they could find. As a matter of course, they took it to the *home* market; and excellently were they working, on the property of their old master. The attorney, the overseer, and the laborers, all seemed equally satisfied—equally at their ease. Here then was one property which would occasion a *bad report* of Jamaica—another which would as surely give rise to a *good report*. As it regards the properties themselves, both reports are true—and they are the respective results of two opposite modes of management.

“At Dawkin’s Caymanas, we had the pleasure of witnessing an interesting spectacle; for the laborers on the property, with their wives, sons and daugh-

ters, were on that day, met at a picnic dinner. The table, of vast length, was spread under a wattled building erected for the purpose, and at the convenient hour of six in the evening, (after the day's work was finished,) was loaded with all sorts of good fare—soup, fish, fowls, pigs, and joints of meat in abundance. About one hundred and fifty men and women, of the African race, attired with the greatest neatness, were assembled, in much harmony and order, to partake of the feast; but no drink was provided, stronger than water. It was a sober, substantial, repast—the festival of peace and freedom. This dinner was to have taken place on New Year's day; but it so happened, that a Baptist Meeting House in another part of the island, had been destroyed by fire; and at the suggestion of their minister, these honest people agreed to waive their dinner, and to subscribe their money, instead, to the rebuilding of the Meeting House. For this purpose, they raised a noble sum, (I believe considerably upwards of £100 sterling;) and now, in the third month of the year, finding that matters were working well with them, they thought it well to indulge themselves with their social dinner. By an unanimous vote, they commissioned me to present a message of their affectionate regards, to Thomas Clarkson, and Thomas Fowell Buxton, the two men, to whom of all others, perhaps, they were the most indebted for their present enjoyment." pp. 91, 92.

“ After breakfast we drove to Kelley’s, one of Lord Sligo’s properties.—We saw the people, on this property, busily engaged in the laborious occupation of holing—a work for which ploughing is now pretty generally substituted, in Jamaica. ‘ How are you all getting along ? ’ said my companion, to a tall, bright-looking black man, busily engaged with his hoe. ‘ Right well, massa, right well, ’ he replied. ‘ I am from America, ’ said my friend, ‘ where there are many slaves: what shall I say to them from you ? shall I tell them that freedom is working well here ? ’ ‘ Yes, massa, ’ said he, ‘ much well under freedom—thank God for it. ’ ‘ Much well ’ they were indeed doing, for they were earning a dollar for every hundred cane holes—a great effort certainly, but one which many of them accomplished by four o’clock in the afternoon. ‘ How is this ? ’ asked the same friend, as he felt the lumps or welts on the shoulder of another man. ‘ O, massa, ’ cried the negro, ‘ I was flogged when a slave—no more whip now—all free. ’ ” p. 96.

“ The prosperity of the planters in Jamaica, must not be measured by the mere amount of the produce of sugar or coffee, as compared with the time of slavery. Even where produce is diminished, profit will be increased—if freedom be fairly tried—by the saving of expense. ‘ I had rather make sixty tierces of coffee, ’ said A. B., ‘ under freedom, than one hundred and twenty under slavery—such is the saving of

expense, that I make a better profit by it—*nevertheless, I mean to make one hundred and twenty, as before.*” p. 118.

“ ‘Do you see that excellent new stone wall round the field below us ?’ said the young physician to me, as we stood at A. B.’s front door, surveying the delightful scenery.—‘That wall could scarcely have been built at all, under slavery, or the apprenticeship ; the necessary labor could not have been hired at less than £5 currency, or about \$13, per chain. Under freedom, it cost only from \$3 50 to \$4 per chain—not one-third of the amount. Still more remarkable is the fact, that the whole of it was built, under the stimulus of job-work, by an invalid negro, who, during slavery, had been given up to a total inaction.’ This was the substance of our conversation—the information was afterwards fully confirmed by the proprietor. Such was the fresh blood infused into the veins of this decrepid person, by the genial hand of freedom, that he had been redeemed from absolute uselessness—had executed a noble work—had greatly improved his master’s property—and finally, had realised for himself, a handsome sum of money. This single fact is admirably and undeniably illustrative of the principles of the case ; and, for that purpose, is as good as a thousand.” p. 119.

“ I will take the present opportunity of offering to thy attention, the account of exports from Jamaica, (as exhibited in the return printed for the House of

Assembly,) for the last year of the apprenticeship, and the first of full freedom.

| | | | | <i>Hhds.</i> |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|-------|--------------|
| Sugar, for the year ending 9th-month, | | | | |
| (Sep.) 30, 1838, | - | - | - | 53,825 |
| Do. do. do. do. | | | 1839, | 45,359 |
| | | | | <hr/> |
| Apparent diminution, | | | - | 8,466 |

“This difference is much less considerable, than many persons have been led to imagine; the real diminution, however, is still less; because there has lately taken place in Jamaica, an increase in the size of the hogshead. Instead of the old measure, which contained 17 cwt., new ones have been introduced, containing from 20 to 22 cwt.—a change which, for several reasons, is an economical one for the planter. Allowing only five per cent. for this change, the deficiency is reduced from 8,466 hogsheads, to 5,175; and this amount is further lessened by the fact, that in consequence of freedom, there is a vast addition to the consumption of sugar among the people of Jamaica itself, and therefore to the home sale.

“The account of coffee is not so favorable.

| | | | | <i>Cwt.</i> |
|--|---|---|-------|-------------|
| Coffee, for the year ending 9th-month, | | | | |
| (Sep.) 30, 1838, | - | - | - | 117,313 |
| Do. do. do. do. | | | 1839, | 78,759 |
| | | | | <hr/> |
| Diminution, (about one-third) | | | | 38,554 |

“The coffee is a very uncertain crop, and the deficiency, on the comparison of these two years, is not greater, I believe, than has often occurred before. We are also to remember, that both in sugar and coffee, the profit to the planter may be increased by the saving of expense, even when the produce is diminished. Still, it must be allowed that some decrease has taken place, on both the articles, in connection with the change of system. With regard to the year 1840, it is expected that coffee will at least maintain the last amount; but a farther decrease on sugar is generally anticipated.

“Now so far as this decrease of produce is connected with the change of system, it is obviously to be traced to a corresponding decrease in the quantity of labor. But here comes the critical question—the real turning point. To what is this decrease in the quantity of labor owing? I answer deliberately, but without reserve, ‘*Mainly* to causes which class under slavery, and not under freedom.’ It is, for the most part, the result of those impolitic attempts to force the labor of freemen, which have disgusted the peasantry, and have led to the desertion of many of the estates.

“It is a cheering circumstance that the amount of planting and other preparatory labor, bestowed on the estates during the autumn of 1839, has been much greater, by all accounts, than in the autumn of 1838. This is itself the effect of an improved understanding between the planters and the peasants; and the re-

sult of it (if other circumstances be equal) cannot fail to be a considerable increase of produce in 1841. I am told, however, that there is one circumstance which may possibly prevent this result, as it regards sugar. It is, that the cultivation of it, under the old system, was forced on certain properties which, from their situation and other circumstances, were wholly unfit for the purpose. These plantations afforded an income to the local agents, but to the proprietors were either unprofitable, or losing, concerns. On such properties, under those new circumstances which bring all things to their true level, the cultivation of sugar must cease.

“In the mean time, the imports of the island are rapidly increasing; trade, improving; the towns, thriving; new villages rising in every direction; property, much enhanced in value; well-managed estates, productive and profitable; expenses of management diminished; short methods of labor adopted; provisions cultivated on a larger scale than ever; and the people, wherever they are properly treated, industrious, contented, and gradually accumulating wealth.” p. 132.

“My narrative respecting the British West India islands, being now brought to a close, I will take the liberty of concentrating and recapitulating the principal points of the subject, in a few distinct propositions.

“1st. *The emancipated negroes are working well on the estates of their old masters.*—Nor does Jamaica,

when duly inspected and fairly estimated, furnish any exception to the general result. We find that, in that island, wherever the negroes are *fairly, kindly, and wisely* treated, there they are working well on the properties of their old masters; and that the existing instances of a contrary description, must be ascribed to causes which class under slavery, and not under freedom. Let it not however be imagined, that the negroes, who are not working on the estates of their old masters, are on that account, idle. Even these, are in general, busily employed in cultivating their own grounds, in various descriptions of handicraft, in lime burning or fishing—in benefiting themselves and the community, through some new, but equally desirable medium. Besides all this, stone walls are built, new houses erected, pastures cleaned, ditches dug, meadows drained, roads made and macadamised, stores fitted up, villages formed, and other beneficial operations effected; the whole of which, before emancipation, it would have been a folly even to attempt. The old notion that the negro is, by constitution, a lazy creature who will do no work at all except by compulsion, is now for ever exploded.” p. 137.

“2d. An increased quantity of work thrown upon the market, is of course followed by the cheapening of labor.” p. 138.

“3d. *Real property has risen, and is rising in value.*—I wish it, however, to be understood, that the comparison is not here made with those olden times

of slavery, when the soils of the island were in their most prolific state, and the slaves themselves, of a corresponding value ; but with those days of depression and alarm, which preceded the act of emancipation. All that I mean to assert is, that landed property, in the British colonies, has touched the bottom, has found that bottom solid, has already risen considerably, and is now on a steady ascending march, towards the recovery of its highest value. One circumstance which greatly contributed to produce its depreciation, was the cry of interested persons who wished to run it down ; and the demand for it, which has arisen among these very persons, is now restoring it to its rightful value. Remember the old gentleman in Antigua, who is always complaining of the effects of freedom, and *always buying land.*" p. 139.

"4th. The personal comforts of the laboring population, under freedom, are multiplied ten-fold." p. 140.

"5th. Lastly, the moral and religious improvement of this people, under freedom, is more than equal to the increase of their comforts. Under this head, there are three points, deserving, respectively, of a distinct place in our memories. First, the rapid increase, and vast extent of elementary and Christian education—schools for infants, young persons, and adults, multiplying in every direction. Secondly, the gradual, but decided diminution of crime, amounting, in many country districts, almost to its extinction. Thirdly, the happy change of the

general, and almost universal, practice of concubinage, for the equally general adoption of marriage. "Concubinage," says Dr. Stewart in his letter to me, "the universal practice of the colored people, has wholly disappeared from amongst them. No young woman of color thinks of forming such connections now." What is more, the improved morality of the blacks, is reflecting itself on the white inhabitants—even the overseers are ceasing, one after another, from a sinful mode of life, and are forming reputable connections in marriage. But while these three points are confessedly of high importance, there is a *fourth* which at once embraces, and outweighs, them all—I mean the diffusion of vital Christianity. I know that great apprehensions were entertained—especially in this country—lest on the cessation of slavery, the negroes should break away at once from their masters, and their ministers. But freedom has come, and while their masters have not been forsaken, their religious teachers have become dearer to them than ever. Under the banner of liberty, the churches and meeting-houses have been enlarged and multiplied, the attendance has become regular and devout, the congregations have, in many cases, been more than doubled—above all, the conversion of souls (as we have reason to believe) has been going on to an extent never before known in these colonies. In a religious point of view, as I have before hinted, the wilderness, in many places, has indeed begun to 'blossom as the rose.' 'Instead

of the thorn,' *has* 'come up the fir-tree, and instead of the briar' *has* 'come up the myrtle tree, and it shall be to the Lord for a name—for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.' p. 141.

I have now given a few extracts from Mr. Gurney's book. They need no comment. Indeed, nothing can be said to convince or move the reader, if these simple records of Emancipation do not find their way to his heart. In the whole history of efforts for human happiness, it is doubtful, if another example can be found of so great a revolution accomplished with so few sacrifices, and such immediate reward. Compare with this the American Revolution, which had for its end to shake off a yoke too light to be named by the side of domestic slavery. Through what fields of blood and years of suffering, did we seek civil freedom, a boon insignificant in comparison with freedom from an owner's grasp! It is the ordinary law of Providence, that great blessings shall be gained by great sacrifices, and that the most beneficial social changes shall bring immediate suffering. That near a million of human beings should pass in a day from the deepest degradation to the rights of freemen, with so little agitation of the social system, is a fact so strange, that we naturally suspect at first some tinging of the picture from the author's sympathies; and we are

brought to full conviction only by the simplicity and minuteness of his details. For one, I should have rejoiced in Emancipation as an unspeakable good, had the immediate results worn a much darker hue. I wanted only to know, that social order was preserved, that the laws were respected after Emancipation. I felt, that, were anarchy escaped, no evil worse than slavery could take its place. I had not forgotten the doctrine of our fathers, that human freedom was worth vast sacrifices, that it could hardly be bought at too great a price.

I proceed now to offer a few remarks on several topics suggested by Mr. Gurney's book, and I shall close by considering the duties which belong to individuals and to the free States in relation to slavery.

The first topic suggested by our author, and perhaps the most worthy of note, is his anxiety to show that Emancipation has been accompanied with little pecuniary loss, that as a monied speculation it is not to be condemned. He evidently supposes, that he is writing for a people who will judge of this grand event in history by the standard of commercial profit or loss. In this view, his simple book tells more than a thousand satires against the spirit of our times. In speaking of West Indian Emancipation, it has been common for men to say, We must

wait for the facts! And what facts have they waited for? They have waited to know, that the master, after fattening many years on oppression, had lost nothing by the triumph of justice and humanity; that the slave, on being freed, was to yield as large an income as before to his employer. This delicate sensibility to the rights of the wrong doer, this concern for property, this unconcern for human nature, is a sign of the little progress made even here by free principles, and of men's ignorance of the great end of social union.

Every good man must protest against this mode of settling the question of Emancipation. It seems to be taken for granted by not a few, that if, in consequence of this event, the crops have fallen off, or the number of coffee bags or sugar hogsheads is lessened, then Emancipation is to be pronounced a failure, and the great act of freeing a people from the most odious bondage, is to be set down as folly. At the North and the South this base doctrine has seized on the public mind. It runs through our presses, not excepting the more respectable. The bright promises of Emancipation are too unimportant for our newspapers; but the fearful intelligence, that this or that island has shipped fewer hogsheads of sugar than in the days of slavery, is thought worthy to be published far and wide, and Emancipation is a curse, because the civilized world must pay a few cents

more to bring tea or coffee to the due degree of sweetness. It passes for an "ultraism" of philanthropy, to prize a million of human beings above as many pounds of sugar.

What is the great end of civilized society? Not coffee and sugar; not the greatest possible amount of mineral, vegetable, or animal productions; but the protection of the rights of all its members. The sacrifice of rights, especially of the dearest and most sacred, to increase of property, is one of the most flagrant crimes of the social state. That every man should have his due, not that a few proprietors should riot on the toil, sweat, and blood of the many, this is the great design of the union of men into communities. Emancipation was not meant to increase the crops, but to restore to human beings their birthright, to give to every man the free use of his powers for his own and others' good.

That the production of sugar would be diminished for a time, in consequence of Emancipation, was a thing to be expected if not desired. It is in the sugar culture, that the slaves in the West Indies have been and are most overworked. In Cuba we are told by men, who have given particular attention to that island, that the mortality on the sugar estates is ten per cent annually, so that a whole gang is used up, swept off in ten years. Suppose Emancipation introduced into Cuba. Would not the production

of sugar be diminished? Ought not every man to desire the diminution? I do not say that such atrocious cruelty was common in the British Islands. But it was in this department chiefly, that the slaves were exposed to excessive toil. It was to be expected then, that, when left free, they would prefer other modes of industry. Accordingly whilst the sugar is diminished, the ordinary articles of subsistence have increased. Some of the slaves have become small farmers, and many more, who hire themselves as laborers, cultivate small patches of land on their account. There is another important consideration. Before freedom, the women formed no inconsiderable part of the gangs who labored on the sugar crops. These are now very much if not wholly withdrawn. Is it a grief to a man, who has the spirit of a man, that woman's burdens are made lighter? Other causes of the diminution of the sugar crop may be found in Mr. Gurney's book; but these are enough to show us, that this effect is due in part to the good working of Emancipation, to a relief of the male and female slave, in which we ought to rejoice.

Before Emancipation I expected that the immediate result of the measure would be more or less idleness, and consequently a diminution of produce. How natural was it to anticipate, that men who had worked under the lash, and had looked on exemp-

tion from toil as the happiness of paradise, should surrender themselves more or less to sloth on becoming their own masters. It is the curse of a bad system to unfit men at first for a better. That the paralyzing effect of slavery should continue after its extinction, that the slave should at the first produce less than before, this surely is no matter of wonder. The wonder is, and it is a great one, that the slaves in the West Indies have, in their new condition, been so greatly influenced by the motives of freemen; that the spirit of industry has so far survived the system of compulsion, under which they had been trained; that ideas of a better mode of living have taken so strong a hold on their minds; that so many refined tastes and wants have been so soon developed. Here is the wonder; and all this shows, what we have often heard, that the negro is more susceptible of civilization from abroad than any other race of men. That some, perhaps many of the slaves, have worked too little, is not to be denied, nor can we blame them much for it. All of us, I suspect, under like circumstances would turn our first freedom into a holiday. Besides, when we think, that they have been sweating and bleeding to nourish in all manner of luxury a few indolent proprietors, they do not seem very inexcusable for a short emulation of their superiors. The negro sleeping all day under the shade of the palm tree, ought not to

offend our moral sense, much more than the “owner” stretched on his ottoman or sofa. What ought to astonish us is the limitation, not the existence of the evil.

It is to be desired, that those among us, who groan over Emancipation, because the staples of the islands are diminished, should be made to wear for a few months the yoke of slavery, so as to judge experimentally whether freedom is worth or not a few hogsheads of sugar. If knowing what this yoke is, they are willing that others should bear it, they deserve themselves above all others to be crushed by it. Slavery is the greatest of wrongs, the most intolerable of all the forms of oppression. We of this country thought, that to be robbed of political liberty was an injury not to be endured; and, as a people, were ready to shed our blood like water to avert it. But political liberty is of no worth compared with *personal*; and slavery robs men of the latter. Under the despotisms of modern Europe, the people, though deprived of political freedom, enjoy codes of laws constructed with great care, the fruits of the wisdom of ages, which recognize the sacredness of the rights of person and property, and under which those rights are essentially secure. A subject of these despotisms may still be a man, may better his condition, may enrich his intellect, may fill the earth with his fame. He enjoys essentially

personal freedom, and through this accomplishes the great ends of his being. To be stripped of this blessing, to be owned by a fellow creature, to hold our limbs and faculties as another's property, to be subject every moment to another's will, to stand in awe of another's lash, to have our whole energies chained to never varying tasks for another's luxury, to hold wife and children at another's pleasure,—what wrong can be compared with this? This is such an insult on human nature, such an impiety towards the common Father, that the whole earth should send up one cry of reprobation against it; and yet we are told, this outrage must continue, lest the market of the civilized world should be deprived of some hogsheads of sugar.

It is hard to weigh human rights against each other; they are all sacred and invaluable. But there is no one which nature, instinct, makes so dear to us as the right of action, of free motion: the right of exerting, and by exertion enlarging our faculties of body and mind; the right of forming plans, of directing our powers according to our convictions of interest and duty; the right of putting forth our energies from a spring in our own breasts. Self-motion, this is what our nature hungers and thirsts for as its true element and life. In truth, every thing that lives, the bird, the insect, craves and delights in freedom of action; and much more must

this be the instinct of a rational moral creature of God, who can attain by such freedom alone to the proper strength and enjoyment of his nature. The rights of property or reputation are poor compared with this. Of what worth would be the products of the universe to a man forbidden to use his limbs, or shut up in a prison? To be deprived of that freedom of action which consists with others' freedom; to be forbidden to exert our faculties for our own good; to be cut off from enterprise; to have a narrow circle drawn round us and to be kept within it by a spy and a lash; to meet an iron barrier in another's selfish will, let impulse or desire turn where it may; to be systematically denied the means of cultivating the powers which distinguish us from the brute;—this is to be wounded not only in the dearest earthly interests, but in the very life of the soul. Our humanity pines and dies rather than lives in this unnatural restraint. Now it is the very essence of slavery to prostrate this right of action, of self-motion, not indirectly or uncertainly, but immediately and without disguise; and is this right to be weighed in the scales against sugar and coffee? and are eight hundred thousand human beings to be robbed of it to increase the luxuries of the world?

What matters it, that the staples of the West Indies are diminished? Do the people there starve?

Are they driven by want to robbery? Has the negro passed from the hands of the overseer into those of the hangman? We learn from Mr. Gurney that the prophecies of ruin to the West Indies are fulfilled chiefly in regard to the prisons. These are in some places falling to decay and every where have fewer inmates. And what makes this result more striking is, that, since Emancipation, many offences, formerly punished summarily by the master on the plantation, now fall under the cognizance of the magistrate, and are of course punishable by imprisonment. Do the freed slaves want clothing? Do rags form the standard of Emancipation? We hear not only of decent apparel, but are told that negro vanity, hardly surpassed by that of the white dandy, suffers nothing for want of decoration or fashionable attire. There is not a sign, that the people fare the worse for freedom. Enough is produced to give subsistence to an improved and cheerful population, and what more can we desire? In our sympathy with the rich proprietor, shall we complain of a change, which has secured to every man his rights, and to thousands, once trodden under foot, the comforts of life and the means of intellectual and moral progress? Is it nothing that the old unfurnished hut of the slave is in many spots giving place to the comfortable cottage? Is it nothing, that in these cottages marriage is an indissoluble tie? that the

mother presses her child to her heart as indeed her own? Is it nothing, that churches are springing up, not from the donations of the opulent, but from the hard earnings of the religious poor? What if a few owners of sugar estates export less than formerly? Are the many always to be sacrificed to the few? Suppose the luxuries of the splendid mansion to be retrenched. Is it no compensation that the comforts of the laborer's hut are increased? Emancipation was resisted on the ground, that the slave, if restored to his rights, would fall into idleness and vagrancy, and even relapse into barbarism. But the emancipated negro discovers no indifference to the comforts of civilized life. He has wants various enough to keep him in action. His standard of living has risen. He desires a better lodging, dress, and food. He has begun too to thirst for accumulation. As Mr. Gurney says, "he understands his interest as well as a yankee." He is more likely to fall into the civilized man's cupidity than into the sloth and filth of a savage. Is it an offset for all these benefits, that the custom house reports a diminution of the staples of slavery?

What a country most needs, is not an increase of its exports, but the well being of all classes of its population and especially of the most numerous class; and these things are not one and the same. It is a striking fact, that while the exports of the

emancipated islands have decreased, the imports are greater than before. In Jamaica, during slavery, the industry of the laborers was given chiefly to a staple, which was sent to absentee proprietors, who expended the proceeds very much in a luxurious life in England. At present, not a little of this industry is employed on articles of subsistence and comfort for the working class and their families; and, at the same time, such an amount of labor is sold by this class to the planter, and so fast are they acquiring a taste for better modes of living, that they need and can pay for great imports from the mother country. Surely when we see the fruits of industry diffusing themselves more and more through the mass of a community, finding their way to the very hovel, and raising the multitude of men to new civilization and self respect, we cannot grieve much, even though it should appear, that on the whole the amount of exports or even of products is decreased. It is not the quantity, but the distribution, the use of products, which determines the prosperity of a state. For example, were the grain, which is now grown among us for distillation, annually destroyed by fire, or were every ship, freighted with distilled liquors, to sink on approaching our shores, so that the crew might be saved, how immensely would the happiness, honor, and real strength of the country be increased by the loss, even were this not to be replac-

ed, as it soon would be, by the springing up of a new, virtuous industry now excluded by intemperance. So were the labor and capital now spent on the importation of pernicious luxuries, to be employed in the intellectual, moral, and religious culture of the whole people, how immense would be the gain, in every respect, though for a short time material products were diminished. A better age will look back with wonder and scorn on the misdirected industry of the present times. The only sure sign of public prosperity is, that the mass of the people are steadily multiplying the comforts of life and the means of improvement; and where this takes place, we need not trouble ourselves about exports or products.

* I am not very anxious to repel the charge against Emancipation of diminishing the industry of the islands, though it has been much exaggerated. Allow that the freed slaves work less. Has man nothing to do but work? Are not too many here overworked? If a people can live with comfort on less toil, are they not to be envied rather than condemned? What a happiness would it be, if we here, by a new wisdom, a new temperance, and a new spirit of brotherly love, could cease to be the care-worn drudges which so many in all classes are, and could give a greater portion of life to thought, to refined social intercourse, to the enjoyment of the

beauty which God spreads over the universe, to works of genius and art, to communion with our Creator? Labor connected with and aiding such a life would be noble. How much of it is thrown away on poor, superficial, degrading gratifications!

We hear the condition of Hayti deplored, because the people are so idle and produce so little for exportation. Many look back to the period, when a few planters drove thousands of slaves to the cane-field and sugar-mill, in order to enrich themselves and to secure to their families the luxurious ease so coveted in tropical climes; and they sigh over the change which has taken place. I look on the change with very different feelings. The negroes in that luxuriant island have increased to above a million. By slight toil they obtain the comforts of life. Their homes are sacred. Their little property in a good degree secure. They live together peaceably. So little inclined are they to violence, that the large amounts of specie paid by the government to France, as the price of independence, have been transported through the country on horseback, with comparatively no defence, and with a safety which no one would be mad enough to expect, under such circumstances, in what are called civilized lands. It is true, their enjoyments are animal in a great degree. They live much like neglected children, making little or no progress, mak-

ing life one long day of unprofitable ease. I should rejoice to raise them from children into men. But when I contrast this tranquil, unoffending life with the horrors of a slave plantation, it seems to me a paradise. What matters it that they send next to no coffee or sugar to Europe? How much better, that they should stretch themselves in the heat of the day under their gracefully waving groves, than sweat and bleed under an overseer for others' selfish ease! Hayti has one curse, and that is not freedom, but tyranny. Her President for life is a despot under a less ominous name. Her government, indifferent or hostile to the improvement of the people, is sustained by a standing army, which undoubtedly is an instrument of oppression. But in so simple a form of society, despotism is not that organized robbery which has flourished in the civilized world. Undoubtedly in this rude state of things, the laws are often unwise, partial, and ill administered. I have no taste for this childish condition of society. Still I turn with pleasure from slavery to the thought of a million of fellow beings, little instructed indeed, but enjoying ease and comfort, under that beautiful sky and on the bosom of that exhaustless soil. In one respect Hayti is infinitely advantaged by her change of condition. Under slavery, her colored population, that is, the mass of her inhabitants had no chance of rising, could make no pro-

gress in intelligence and in the arts and refinements of life. They were doomed to perpetual degradation. Under freedom their improvement is possible. They are placed within the reach of meliorating influences. Their intercourse with other nations, and the opportunities afforded to many among them of bettering their condition, furnish various means and incitements to progress. If the Catholic church, which is rendering at this moment immense aid to civilization and pure morals in Ireland, were to enter in earnest on the work of enlightening and regenerating Hayti, or if (what I should greatly prefer,) any other church could have free access to the people, this island might in a short time become an important accession to the Christian and civilized world, and the dark cloud which hangs over the first years of her freedom would vanish before the brightness of her later history.

My maxim is, "Any thing but slavery! Poverty sooner than slavery!" Suppose that we of this good city of Boston were summoned to choose between living on bread and water and such a state of things as existed in the West Indies. Suppose that the present wealth of our metropolis could be continued only on the condition, that five thousand out of our eighty thousand inhabitants should live as princes, and the rest of us be reduced to slavery to sustain the luxury of our masters. Should we not

all cry out, Give us the bread and water? Would we not rather see our fair city levelled to the earth, and choose to work out slowly for ourselves and our children a better lot, than stoop our necks to the yoke? So we all feel, when the case is brought home to ourselves. What should we say to the man, who should strive to terrify us, by prophecies of diminished products and exports, into the substitution of bondage for the character of freemen.

In the preceding remarks I have insisted that Emancipation is not to be treated as a question of profit and loss, that its merits are not to be settled by its influence on the master's gains. Mr. Gurney however maintains, that the master has nothing to fear, that real estate has risen, that free labor costs less than that of the slave. All this is good news and should be spread through the land; for men are especially inclined to be just, when they can serve themselves by justice. But Emancipation rests on higher ground than the master's accumulation, even on the rights and essential interests of the slave. And let these be held sacred, though the luxury of the master be retrenched.

2. I have now finished my remarks on a topic which was always present to the mind of our author—the alleged decrease of industry and exports since

Emancipation. The next topic to which I shall turn, is his notice of slavery in Cuba. He only touched at this Island, but evidently received the same sad impression which we receive from those who have had longer time for observation. He says :

“Of one feature in the slave trade and slavery of Cuba, I had no knowledge until I was on the spot. The importation consists almost entirely of *men*, and we were informed that on many of the estates, not a single female is to be found. Natural increase is disregarded. The Cubans import the stronger animals, like bullocks, work them up, and then seek a fresh supply. This surely is a system of most unnatural barbarity.”

This barbarity is believed to be unparalleled. The young African, torn from home and his native shore, is brought to a plantation, where he is never to know a home. All the relations of domestic life are systematically denied him. Woman's countenance he is not to look upon. The child's voice, he is no more to hear. His owner finds it more gainful to import than to breed slaves ; and still more has made the sad discovery, that it is cheaper to “work up” the servile laborer in his youth and to replace him by a new victim, than to let him grow old in moderate toil. I have been told by some of the most recent travellers in Cuba who

gave particular attention to the subject*, that in the sugar making season, the slaves are generally allowed but four out of the twenty four hours, for sleep. From these too I learned, that a gang of slaves is used up in ten years. Of the young men imported from Africa, one out of ten dies yearly. To supply this enormous waste of life, above twenty five thousand slaves are imported from Africa†, in vessels so crowded, that sometimes one quarter, sometimes one half of the wretched creatures bought in Africa perish in agony before reaching land. It is to be feared, that Cuban slavery, traced from the moment when the African touches the deck, to the happier moment when he finds his grave on the ocean or the plantation, includes an amount of crime and misery not to be paralleled in any portion of the

* My accounts from Cuba have been received from Dr. Madden and David Turnbull, Esq.; the former, one of the British commissioners, resident at Havana to enforce the treaty with Spain in relation to the slave trade; the latter, a gentleman who visited Cuba chiefly if not solely to enquire into slavery. Mr. Turnbull's account of Cuba, in his "Travels in the West," deserves to be read. The reports of such men, confirmed in a very important particular by Mr. Gurney, have an authority, which obliges me to speak as I have done of the slave-system of this island. If indeed (what is most unlikely,) they have fallen into errors on the subject, these can easily be exposed, and I shall rejoice in being the means of bringing out the truth.

† There are different estimates of the number, some making it much greater than the text.

globe, civilized or savage. And there are more reasons than one why I would bring this horrid picture before the minds of my countrymen. We, We, do much to sustain this system of horror and blood. The Cuban slave trade is carried on in vessels built especially for this use in American ports. These vessels often sail under the American flag, and are aided by American merchant-men, and, as is feared, by American capital. And this is not all; the sugar, in producing of which so many of our fellow creatures perish miserably, is shipped in great quantities to this country. We are the customers, who stimulate by our demands this infernal cruelty. And knowing this, shall we become accessories to the murder of our brethren, by continuing to use the fruit of the hard-wrung toil which destroys them? The sugar of Cuba comes to us drenched with human blood. So we ought to see it and to turn from it with loathing. The guilt which produces it, ought to be put down by the spontaneous, instinctive horror of the civilized world.

There is another fact worthy attention. It is said, that most of the plantations in Cuba, which have been recently brought under cultivation, belong to Americans, that the number of American slave-holders is increasing rapidly on the Island, and consequently that the importation of human cargoes from Africa finds much of its encourage-

ment from the citizens of our republic. It is not easy to speak in measured terms of this enormity. For men born and brought up amidst slavery many apologies may be made. But men, born beyond the sound of the lash, brought up where human rights are held sacred, who, in face of all the light thrown now on slavery, can still deal in human flesh, can become customers of the "felon" who tears the African from his native shore, and can with open eyes inflict this deepest wrong for gain and gain alone—such "have no cloak for their sin." Men so hard of heart, so steeled against the reproofs of conscience, so intent on thriving though it be by the most cruel wrongs, are not to be touched by human expostulation and rebuke. But if any should tremble before Almighty justice, ought not *they* ?

There is another reason for dwelling on this topic. It teaches us the little reliance to be placed on the impressions respecting slavery brought home by superficial observers. We have seen what slavery is in Cuba ; and yet men of high character from this country, who have visited that island, have returned to tell us of the mildness of the system. Men, who would cut off their right hand, sooner than withdraw the sympathy of others from human suffering, have virtually done so, by their representation of the kindly working of slavery on the very spot where it exists with peculiar horrors. They have

visited some favored plantation, been treated with hospitality, seen no tortures, heard no shrieks, and then come home to reprove those who set forth indignantly the wrongs of the slave. And what is true with regard to the visitors of the West Indies, applies to those who visit our southern states. Having witnessed slavery in the families of some of the most enlightened and refined inhabitants, they return to speak of it as no very fearful thing. Had they inquired about the state of society through the whole country, and learned that more than one fourth of the inhabitants cannot write their own names, they would have forborne to make a few selected families the representative of the community, and might have believed in the possibility of some of the horrid details recorded in "Slavery as it is." For myself, I do not think it worth my while to inquire into the merits of slavery in this or that region. It is enough for me to know, that one human being holds other human beings as his property, subject to his arbitrary and irresponsible will, and compels them to toil for his luxury and ease. I know enough of men, to know what the workings of such a system on a large scale must be; and I hold my understanding insulted when men talk to me of its humanity. If there be one truth of history taught more plainly than any other, it is the tendency of human nature to abuse power. To protect our-

selves against power, to keep this in perpetual check by dividing it among many hands, by limiting its duration, by defining its action with sharp lines, by watching it jealously, by holding it responsible for abuses, this is the grand aim and benefit of the social institutions, which are our chief boast. Arbitrary, unchecked power, is the evil against which all experience cries out so loudly, that apologies for it may be dismissed without a hearing. But admit the plea of its apologists. Allow slavery to be ever so humane. Grant that the man who owns me, is ever so kind. The wrong of him who presumes to talk of owning me is too unmeasured to be softened by kindness. There are wrongs which can be redeemed by no kindness. Because a man treads on me with velvet foot, must I be content to grovel in the earth. Because he gives me meat as well as bread, whilst he takes my child and sells it into a land where my chained limbs cannot follow, must I thank him for his kindness? I do not envy those who think slavery no very pitiable a lot, provided its nakedness be covered and its hunger regularly appeased.

It is worthy of consideration, that the slave's lot does not improve with the advance of what is called civilization, that is, of trade and luxuries. Slavery is such a violation of nature, that it is an exception to the general law of progress. In rude states of society, when men's wants and employ-

ments are few, and trade and other means of gain hardly exist, the slave leads a comparatively easy life; he partakes of the general indolence. He lives in the family much as a member, and is oppressed by no great disparity of rank. But when society advances, and wants multiply, and the lust of gain springs up, and prices increase, the slave's lot grows harder. He is viewed more and more as a machine to be used for profit, and is tasked like the beast of burden. The distance between him and his master increases, and he has less and less of the spirit of a man. He may have better food, but it is that he may work the more. He may be whipped less passionately or frequently; but it is, because the never varying routine of toil and the more skilful discipline which civilization teaches, have subdued him more completely. Thus to the slave it is no gain that the community grow richer and more luxurious. He has an interest in the return of society to barbarism, for in this case he would come nearer the general level. He would escape the peculiar ignominy and accumulated burdens which he has to bear in civilized life.

3. I pass to another topic suggested by Mr. Gurney's book. What is it, let me ask, which has freed the West India slave, and is now raising him to the dig-

nity of a man? The answer is most cheering. The great Emancipator has been Christianity. Policy, interest, state-craft, church-craft, the low motives which have originated other revolutions, have not worked here. From the times of Clarkson and Wilberforce, down to the present day, the friends of the slave, who have pleaded his cause and broken his chains, have been Christians; and it is from Christ the divine philanthropist, from the inspiration of his cross, that they have gathered faith, hope, and love for the conflict. This illustration of the spirit and power of Christianity, is a bright addition to the evidences of its truth. We have here the miracle of a great nation, rising in its strength, not for conquest, not to assert its own rights, but to free and elevate the most despised and injured race on earth; and as this stands alone in human history, so it recals to us those wonderful works of mercy and power, by which the divinity of our religion was at first confirmed.

It is with deep sorrow, that I am compelled to turn to the contrast between religion in England and religion in America. There it vindicates the cause of the oppressed. Here it rivets the chain and hardens the heart of the oppressor. At the South, what is the Christian ministry doing for the slave? Teaching the rightfulness of his yoke, joining in the cry against the men who plead for his freedom, giving the sanction of God's name to the

greatest offence against his children. This is the saddest view, presented by the conflict with slavery. The very men, whose office it is to plead against all wrong, to enforce the obligation of impartial, inflexible justice, to breathe the spirit of universal brotherly love, to resist at all hazards the spirit and evil customs of the world, to live and to die under the banner of Christian truth, have enlisted under the standard of slavery. Had they merely declined to bring the subject into the Church, on the ground of the presence of the slave, they would have been justified. Had they declined to discuss it through the press and in conversation, on the ground that the public mind was too furious to bear the truth, they would have been approved by multitudes; though it is wisest for the minister to resign his office, when it can only be exercised under menace and unrighteous restraint, and to go where with unsealed lips he may teach and enforce human duty in its full extent. But the ministers at the South have not been content with silence. The majority of them are understood to have given their support to slavery, to have thrown their weight into the scale of the master. That in so doing, they have belied their clear convictions, that they have preached known falsehood, we do not say. Few ministers of Christ, we trust, can teach what their deliberate judgments condemn. But in cases like the present, how

common is it for the judgment to receive a shape and hue from self interest, from private affection, from the tyranny of opinion and the passions of the multitude ! Few ministers, we trust, can sin against clear, steady light. But how common is it for the mind to waver and to be obscured in regard to scorned and persecuted truth ! When we look beyond the bounds of slavery, we find the civilized and Christian world with few exceptions reprobating slavery, as at war with the precepts and spirit of Christ. But at the South, his ministers sustain it as consistent with justice, equity, and disinterested love. Can we help saying, that the loud, menacing, popular voice has proved too strong for the servants of Christ ?

We hoped better things than this, because the prevalent sects at the South are the Methodists and Baptists, and these were expected to be less tainted by a worldly spirit, than other denominations in which luxury and fashion bear greater sway. But the Methodists, forgetful of their great founder, who cried aloud against slavery and spared not ; and the Baptists, forgetful of the sainted name of Roger Williams, whose love of the despised Indian, and whose martyr spirit should have taught them fearless sympathy with the negro, have been found in the ranks of the foes of freedom. Indeed their allegiance to slavery seems to know no bounds.

A Baptist association at the South decreed, that a slave, sold at a distance from his wife, might marry again in obedience to his master ; and that he would even do wrong, to disobey in this particular. Thus one of the plainest precepts of Christianity has been set at nought. Thus the poor slave is taught to renounce his wife, however dear, to rupture the most sacred social tie, that, like the other animals, he may keep up the stock of the estate. The general Methodist Conference during this very year, have decreed, that the testimony of a colored member of their churches should not be received against a white member, who may be on trial before an ecclesiastical tribunal. Thus in church affairs, a multitude of disciples of Jesus Christ, who have been received into Christian communion on the ground of their spiritual regeneration, who belong, as is believed, to the church on earth and in Heaven, are put down by their brethren as incapable of recognizing the obligation of truth, of performing the most common duty of morality, and are denied a privilege conceded, in worldly affairs, to the most depraved. Thus the religion of the South, heaps insult and injury on the slave.

And what have the Christians of the North done? We rejoice to say, that from these, have gone forth not a few testimonies against slavery. Not a few ministers in associations, conventions,

presbyteries or conferences, have declared the inconsistency of the system with the principles of Christianity, and with the law of love. Still the churches and congregations of the free States, have in the main looked coldly on the subject, and discouraged too effectually the free expression of thought and feeling in regard to it by the religious teacher. Under that legislation of public opinion, which, without courts or offices, sways more despotically than Czars or Sultans, the pulpit and the press, have, in no small degree, been reduced to silence as to slavery, especially in cities, the chief seats of this invisible power. Some fervent spirits among us, seeing religion, in this and other cases, so ready to bend to worldly opinion, have been filled with indignation. They have spoken of Christianity, as having no life here, as a beautiful corpse, laid out in much state, worshipped with costly homage, but worshipped very much as were the prophets, whose tombs were so ostentatiously garnished in the times of the Savior. But this is unjust. Christianity lives and acts among us. It imposes many salutary restraints. It inspires many good deeds. There are not a few, in whom it puts forth a power, worthy of its better days, and the number of such is growing. Let us not be ungrateful for what this religion is doing, nor shut our ears against the prophecies which the present gives of its future triumphs. Still, as a general rule, the Christianity

of this day falls fearfully short of the Christianity of the immediate followers of our Lord. Then, the meaning of a Christian was, that he took the cross and followed Christ, that he counted not his life dear to him in the service of God and man, that he trod the world under his feet. Now we ask leave of the world, how far we shall follow Christ. What wrong or abuse is there, which the bulk of the people may think essential to their prosperity and may defend with outcry and menace, before which the Christianity of this age will not bow? We need a new John, who, with the untamed and solemn energy of the wilderness, shall cry out among us, Repent. We need that the Crucified should speak to us with a more startling voice, "He that forsaketh not all things, and followeth me, cannot be my disciple." We need that the all-sacrificing, all-sympathising spirit of Christianity, should cease to bow to the spirit of the world. We need that, under a deep sense of want and wo, the church should cry out, "Thy kingdom come," and with holy importunity should bring down new strength, and life, and love from Heaven.

4. I pass to another topic, suggested by Mr. Gurney's book. According to this and all the books written on the subject, Emancipation has borne a singular testimony to the noble elements of the ne

gro character. It may be doubted, whether any other race would have borne this trial, as well as they. Before the day of freedom came, the West Indies and this country foreboded fearful consequences from the sudden transition of such a multitude from bondage to liberty. Revenge, massacre, unbridled lust, were to usher in the grand festival of Emancipation, which was to end in the breaking out of a new Pandemonium on earth. Instead of this, the holy day of liberty was welcomed by shouts and tears of gratitude. The liberated negroes did not hasten as Saxon serfs in like circumstances might have done, to haunts of intoxication, but to the house of God. Their rude churches were thronged. Their joy found utterance in prayers and hymns. History contains no record more touching, than the account of the religious, tender thankfulness which this vast boon awakened in the negro breast. And what followed? Was this beautiful emotion an evanescent transport, soon to give way to ferocity and vengeance? It was natural for masters, who had inflicted causeless stripes, and filled the cup of the slaves with bitterness, to fear their rage after liberation. But the overwhelming joy of freedom having subsided, they returned to labor. Not even a blow was struck in the excitement of that vast change. No violation of the peace required the interposition of the magistrate. The new relation

was assumed easily, quietly, without an act of violence ; and, since that time, in the short space of two years, how much have they accomplished ? Beautiful villages have grown up. Little freeholds have been purchased. The marriage tie has become sacred. The child is educated. Crime has diminished. There are islands, where a greater proportion of the young are trained in schools, than among the whites of the slave States. I ask, whether any other people on the face of the earth, would have received and used the infinite blessing of liberty so well.

The history of West Indian Emancipation teaches us, that we are holding in bondage one of the best races of the human family. The negro is among the mildest, gentlest of men. He is singularly susceptible of improvement from abroad. His children, it is said, receive more rapidly than ours the elements of knowledge. How far he can originate improvements, time only can teach. His nature is affectionate, easily touched ; and hence he is more open to religious impression than the white man. The European race have manifested more courage, enterprise, invention ; but in the dispositions which Christianity particularly honors, how inferior are they to the African ! When I cast my eyes over our Southern region, the land of Bowie knives, lynch law, and duels, of “ chivalry,” honor, and revenge ; and

when I consider that Christianity is declared to be a spirit of charity, “which seeketh not its own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil and endureth all things,” and is also declared to be “the wisdom from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits;” can I hesitate in deciding, to which of the races in that land Christianity is most adapted, and in which its noblest disciples are most likely to be reared? It may be said, indeed, of all the European nations, that they are distinguished by qualities opposed to the spirit of Christianity; and it is one of the most remarkable events of history, that the religion of Jesus should have struck root among them. As yet it has not subdued them. The “law of honor,” the strongest of all laws in the European race, is, to this day, directly hostile to the character and word of Christ. The African carries within him, much more than we, the germs of a meek, long-suffering, loving virtue. A short residence among the negroes in the West Indies impressed me with their capacity of improvement. On all sides I heard of their religious tendencies, the noblest in human nature. I saw, too, on the plantation where I resided, a gracefulness and dignity of form and motion, rare in my own native New England. And this is the race which has been selected to be trodden down and confounded with

the brutes ! Undoubtedly the negroes are debased ; for were slavery not debasing, I should have little quarrel with it. But let not their degradation be alleged in proof of peculiar incapacity of moral elevation. They are given to theft ; but there is no peculiar aggravated guilt, in stealing from those by whom they are robbed of all their rights and their very persons. They are given to falsehood ; but this is the very effect produced by oppression on the Irish peasantry. They are undoubtedly sensual ; and yet the African countenance seldom shows that coarse, brutal sensuality, which is so common in the face of the white man. I should expect from the African race, if civilized, less energy, less courage, less intellectual originality than in our race, but more amiableness, tranquillity, gentleness, and content. They might not rise to an equality in outward condition, but would probably be a much happier race. There is no reason for holding such a race in chains ; they need no chain to make them harmless.*

In the remarks now made I have aimed only to express my sympathy with the wronged. As to the white population of the South, I have no intention to disparage it. I have no undue partiality to the North ; for I believe, that were northern men

* See note at the end.

slave-holders, and satisfied that they could grow richer by slave than by free labor, not a few would retain their property in human flesh with as resolute and furious a grasp as their southern brethren. In truth, until the cotton culture had intoxicated the minds of the South with golden dreams, that part of the country seemed less tainted by cupidity than our own. The character of that region is still a mixed one, impulsive, passionate, vindictive, sensual ; but frank, courageous, self-relying, enthusiastic, and capable of great sacrifices for a friend. Could the withering influence of Slavery be withdrawn, the Southern character, though less consistent, less based on principle, would be more attractive and lofty than that of the North. The South is fond of calling itself Anglo-Saxon. Judging from character, I should say that this name belongs much more to the North, the country of steady, persevering, unconquerable energy. Our Southern brethren remind me more of the Normans. They seem to have in their veins the burning blood of that pirate race, who spread terror through Europe, who seized part of France as a prey, and then pounced on England ; a conquering, chivalrous race, from which most of the noble families of England are said to be derived. There were certainly noble traits in the Norman character, such as its enthusiasm, its defiance of peril by sea and land, its force of will,

its rude sense of honor. But the man of Norman spirit, or Norman blood, should never be a slaveholder. He is the last man to profit by this relation. His pride and fierce passions need restraint, not perpetual nourishment; whilst his indisposition to labor, his desire to live by others' toil, demands the stern pressure of necessity to rescue him from dishonorable sloth. Under kindlier influences he may take rank among the noblest of his race.

However, in looking at the South, the first thing which strikes my eyes is not the Anglo-Saxon or the Norman, but the Slave. I overlook the dwellings of the rich. My thoughts go to the comfortless hut of the negro. They go to the dark mass at work in the fields. That injured man is my brother, and ought not my sympathies to gather round him peculiarly? Talk not to me of the hospitality, comforts, luxuries of the planter's mansion. These are all the signs of a mighty wrong. My thoughts turn first to the slave. I would not, however, exaggerate his evils. He is not the most unhappy man on that soil. True, his powers are undeveloped; but therefore he is incapable of the guilt which others incur. He has, as we have seen, a generous nature, and his day of improvement, though long postponed, is to come. When I see by his side (and is the sight very rare?) the self-indulgent man who, from mere love of gain and

ease, extorts his sweat, I think of the fearful words which the Savior has put into the lips of the Hebrew patriarch in the unseen world, "Thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and thou art tormented." Distinctions founded on wrong endure but for a day. Could we now penetrate the future world, what startling revelations would be made to us! Before the all-seeing impartial justice of God, we should see every badge of humiliation taken off from the fallen, crushed, and enslaved; and where, where would the selfish, unfeeling oppressor appear!

5. I shall advert but to one more topic suggested by Mr. Gurney's book; I refer to the kind and respectful manner in which he speaks of many slave-holders. He has no sympathy with those, who set down this class of men indiscriminately as the chief of sinners, but speaks with satisfaction of examples of piety and virtue which he found in their number. By some among us this lenity will be ascribed to his desire to win for himself golden opinions; but he deserves no such censure. The opinion of slave-holders is of no moment to him; for he has left them forever, and returns to his own country, where his testimony to their worth will find no

sympathy, but expose him to suspicion, perhaps to reproach. Of the justice of his judgment I have no doubt. Among slave-holders there may be and there are good men. But the inferences from this judgment are often false and pernicious. There is a common disposition to connect the character of the slave-holder and the character of slavery. Many at the North, who by intercourse of business or friendship have come to appreciate the good qualities of individuals at the South, are led to the secret if not uttered inference, that a system sustained by such people can be no monstrous thing. They repel indignantly the invectives of the Abolitionists against the master, and by a natural process go on to question or repel their denunciation of slavery. Here lies the secret of much of the want of just feeling in regard to this institution. People become reconciled to it in a measure by the virtues of its supporters. I will not reply to this error by insisting that the virtues, which grow up under slavery, bear a small proportion to the vices which it feeds. I take a broader ground. I maintain that we can never argue safely from the character of a man to the system he upholds. It is a solemn truth, not yet understood as it should be, that the worst institutions may be sustained, the worst deeds performed, the most merciless cruelties inflicted by the conscientious and the good. History teaches no truth more

awful, and proofs of it crowd on us from the records of the earliest and latest times. Thus, the worship of the immoral deities of heathenism was sustained by the great men of antiquity. The bloodiest and most unrighteous wars have been instigated by patriots. For ages the Jews were thought to have forfeited the rights of men, as much as the African race at the South, and were insulted, spoiled, and slain, not by mobs, but by sovereigns and prelates, who really supposed themselves avengers of the crucified Savior. Trajan and Marcus Aurelius, men of singular humanity, doomed Christians to death, surrendering their better feelings to what they thought the safety of the State. Few names in history are more illustrious than Isabella of Castile. She was the model in most respects of a noble woman. But Isabella outstripped her age in what she thought pious zeal against heretics. Having taken lessons in her wars against the Moors, and in the extermination of the Jews, she entered fully into the spirit of the inquisition; and by her great moral power contributed more than any other sovereign to the extension of its fearful influence, and thus the horrible tortures and murders of that infernal institution, in her ill-fated country, lie very much at her door. Of all the causes which have contributed to the ruin of Spain, the gloomy, unrelenting spirit of religious bigotry has wrought most

deeply ; so that the illustrious Isabella, through her zeal for religion and the salvation of her subjects, sowed the seeds of her country's ruin. It is remarkable that Spain, in her late struggle for freedom, has not produced one great man ; and at this moment, the country seems threatened with disorganization ; and it is to the almost universal corruption, to the want of mutual confidence, to the deep dissimulation and fraud which the spirit of the inquisition, the spirit of misguided religion, has spread through society, that this degradation must chiefly be traced. The wrongs, woes, cruelties inflicted by the religious, the conscientious, are among the most important teachings of the past. Nor has this strange mixture of good and evil ceased. Crimes, to which time and usage have given sanction, are still found in neighborhood with virtue. Examples, taken from other countries, stagger belief, but are true. Thus, in not a few regions, the infant is cast out to perish by parents who abound in tenderness to their surviving children. Our own enormities are to be understood hereafter. Slavery is not then absolved of guilt by the virtues of its supporters, nor are its wrongs on this account a whit less tolerable. The inquisition was not a whit less infernal, because sustained by Isabella. Wars are not a whit less murderous, because waged for our country's glory ; nor was the slave trade less a com-

plication of unutterable cruelties, because our fathers brought the African here to make him a Christian.

The great truth, now insisted on, that evil is evil, no matter at whose door it lies, and that men acting from conscience and religion may do nefarious deeds, needs to be better understood, that we may not shelter ourselves or our institutions under the names of the great or the good who have passed away. It shows us, that in good company we may do the work of fiends. It teaches us, how important is the culture of our whole moral and rational nature, how dangerous to rest on the old and the established without habitually and honestly seeking the truth. With these views, I believe at once that slavery is an atrocious wrong, and yet that among its upholders may be found good and pious people. I do not look on a slave country as one of the provinces of Hell. There, as elsewhere, the human spirit may hold communion with God, and it may ascend thence to Heaven. Still slavery does not lay aside its horrible nature because of the character of some of its supporters. Persecution is a cruel outrage, no matter by whom carried on, and so slavery, no matter by whom maintained, works fearful evil to bond and free. It breathes a moral taint, contaminates young and old, prostrates the dearest rights, and strengthens the cupidity, pride, love of power, and selfish sloth on which it is founded. I readily grant, that

among slave-holders are to be found upright, religious men, and especially pious, gentle, disinterested, noble-minded women, who sincerely labor to be the guardians and benefactors of the slaves, and under whose kind control much comfort may be enjoyed. But we must not on this account shut our eyes on the evils of the institution or forbear to expose them. On the contrary, this is the very reason for lifting up our voices against it; for slavery rests mainly on the virtues of its upholders. Without the sanction of good and great names it would soon die. Were it left as a monopoly to the selfish, cruel, unprincipled, it could not stand a year. It would become in men's view as infamous as the slave trade, and be ranked among felonies. It is a solemn duty to speak plainly of wrongs, which good men perpetrate. It is very easy to cry out against crimes which the laws punish, and which popular opinion has branded with infamy. What is especially demanded of the Christian is, a faithful, honest, generous testimony against enormities which are sanctioned by numbers, and fashion, and wealth, and especially by great and honored names, and which, thus sustained, lift up their heads to Heaven, and repay rebuke with menace and indignation.

I know that there are those who consider all acknowledgement of the virtues of slave-holders as treachery to the cause of freedom. But truth is

truth, and must always be spoken and trusted. To be just is a greater work than to free slaves or propagate religion, or save souls. I have faith in no policy but that of simplicity and godly sincerity. The crimes of good men in past times, of which I have spoken, have sprung chiefly from the disposition to sacrifice the simple primary obligations of truth, justice, and humanity, to some grand cause, such as religion or country, which has dazzled and bewildered their moral sense. To free the slave, let us not wrong his master. Let us rather find comfort in the thought, that there is no unmixed evil, that a spirit of goodness mixes more or less with the worst usages, and that even slavery is illumined by the virtues of the bond and free.

I have now finished my remarks on Mr. Gurney's book, and in doing so I join with many readers in thanking him for the good news he has reported, and in repeating his prayers for the success of Emancipation. I now proceed to a different order of considerations of great importance, and which ought always to be connected with such discussions as have now engaged us. The subject before us is not one of mere speculation. It has a practical side. There are Duties which belong to us as Individuals, and as Free States, in regard to slavery. To these I now ask attention.

I begin with individuals ; and their duty is, to be faithful in their testimony against this great evil, to speak their minds freely and fully, and thus to contribute what they may to the moral power of public opinion. It is not enough to think and feel justly. Sentiments not expressed, slumber and too often die. Utterance in some form or other is a principal duty of a social being. The chief good which an enlightened virtuous mind can do is to bring itself forth. Not a few among us have refrained from this duty, have been speechless in regard to slavery, through disapprobation of what they have called the violence of the Abolitionists. They have said, that in this rage of the elements it was fit to be still. But the storm is passing away. Abolitionism, in obedience to an irresistible law of our nature, has parted with much of its original vehemence. All noble enthusiasms pass through a feverish stage, and grow wiser and more serene. Still more, the power of the Anti-slavery Association is not a little broken by internal divisions, and by its increasing reliance on political action. It has thrown away its true strength, that is, moral influence, in proportion as it has consented to mix in the frays of party. Now then, when associations are waning, it is time for the individual to be heard, time for a free solemn protest against wrong.

It is often said, that all moral efforts to forward

the abolition of slavery are futile; that to expect men to sacrifice interest to duty is a proof of insanity; that, as long as slavery is a good pecuniary speculation, the South will stand by it to the death; that whenever slave labor shall prove a drug, it will be abandoned, and not before. It is vain, we are told, to talk, reason, or remonstrate. On this ground some are anxious to bring East India cotton into competition with the Southern, that, by driving the latter from the market, the excessive stimulus to slave breeding and the profits of slave labor may cease. And is this true? Must men be starved into justice and humanity? Have truth, and religion, and conscience no power? One thing we know, that the insanity of opposing moral influence to deep-rooted evils, has at least great names on its side. The Christian faith is the highest form of this madness and folly, and its history shows that "the foolishness of God is stronger than men." What an insult is it on the South and on human nature, to believe, that millions of slave-holders, of all ages, sexes, and conditions, in an age of freedom, intelligence, and Christian faith, are proof against all motives but the very lowest. Even in the most hardened, conscience never turns wholly to stone. Humanity never dies out among a people. After all, the most prevailing voice on earth is that of truth. Could Emancipation be extorted only by

depreciation of slave labor, it would indeed be a good ; but how much happier a relation would the master establish with the colored race, if from no force but that of principle and kindness he should set them free ? Undoubtedly at the South, as elsewhere, the majority are selfish, mercenary, corrupt ; but it would be easy to find there more than “ten righteous,” to find a multitude of upright, compassionate, devout minds, which, if awakened from the long insensibility of habit to the evils of slavery, would soon overpower the influences of the merely selfish slave-holder.

We are told, indeed, by the South, that slavery is no concern of ours, and consequently that the less we say of it the better. What ! shall the wrong-doer forbid lookers on to speak, because the affair is a private one, in which others must not interfere ? Whoever injures a man binds all men to remonstrate, especially when the injured is too weak to speak in his own behalf. Let none imagine, that by seizing a fellow-creature and setting him apart as a chattel, they can sever his ties to God or man. Spiritual connexions are not so easily broken. You may carry your victim ever so far, you may seclude him on a plantation or in a cell. But you cannot transport him beyond the sphere of human brotherhood, or cut him off from his race. The great bond of humanity is the last to be dissolved. Other

ties, those of family and civil society, are severed by death. This, founded as it is on what is immortal in our nature, has an everlasting sacredness, and is never broken; and every man has a right and still more is bound to lift up his voice against its violation.

There are many whose testimony against slavery is very much diluted by the fact of its having been so long sanctioned, not only by usage, but by law, by public force, by the forms of civil authority. They bow before numbers and prescription. But in an age of enquiry and innovation, when other institutions must make good their title to continuance, it is a suspicious tenderness, which fears to touch a heavy yoke, because it has grown by time into the necks of our fellow-creatures. Do we not know that unjust monopolies, cruel prejudices, barbarous punishments, oppressive institutions, have been upheld by law for ages? Majorities are prone to think that they can create right by vote, and can legalize gainful crimes by calling the forms of justice to their support. But these conspiracies against humanity, these insults offered to the majesty and immutableness of truth and rectitude, are the last forms of wickedness to be spared. Selfish men, by combining into a majority, cannot change tyranny into right. The whole earth may cry out, that this or that man was made to be owned and used as a chat-

tel, or a brute, by his brother. But his birthright as a man, as a rational creature of God, cleaves to him untouched by the clamor. Crimes, exalted into laws, become therefore the more odious, just as the false gods of heathenism, when set up of old on the altar of Jehovah, shocked his true worshippers the more, by usurping so conspicuously the honors due to him alone.

It is important, that we should each of us bear our conscientious testimony against slavery, not only to swell that tide of public opinion, which is to sweep it away, but that we may save ourselves from sinking into silent, unsuspected acquiescence in the evil. A constant resistance is needed to this downward tendency, as is proved by the tone of feeling in the free states. What is more common among ourselves, than a courteous, apologetic disapprobation of slavery, which differs little from taking its part. This is one of its worst influences. It taints the whole country. The existence, the perpetual presence of a great, prosperous, unrestrained system of wrong in a community, is one of the sorest trials to the moral sense of the people, and needs to be earnestly withstood. The idea of justice becomes unconsciously obscured in our minds. Our hearts become more or less seared to wrong. The South says, that slavery is nothing to us at the North. But through our trade we are brought into constant

contact with it; we grow familiar with it; still more, we thrive by it; and the next step is easy, to consent to the sacrifice of human beings, by whom we prosper. The dead know not their want of life, and so a people, whose moral sentiments are palsied by the interweaving of all their interests with a system of oppression, become degraded without suspecting it. In consequence of this connection with slave countries, the Idea of Human Rights, that great idea of our age, and on which we profess to build our institutions, is darkened, weakened among us, so as to be to many little more than a sound. A country of licensed, legalized wrongs, is not the atmosphere in which the sentiment of reverence for these rights can exist in full power. In such a community, there may be a respect for the arbitrary rights, which law creates and may destroy, and a respect for historical rights, which rest on usage. But the fundamental rights which inhere in man as man, and which lie at the foundation of a just, equitable, beneficent, noble polity, must be imperfectly comprehended. This depression of moral sentiment in a people is an evil, the extent of which is not easily apprehended. It affects and degrades every relation of life. Men, in whose sight human nature is stripped of all its rights and dignity, cannot love or honor any who possess it, as they ought. In offering these remarks I do not forget what I rejoice to know, that there is

much moral feeling among us in regard to slavery. But still there is a strong tendency to indifference, and to something worse ; and on this account we owe it to our own moral health, and to the moral life of society, to express plainly and strongly our moral abhorrence of this institution.

This duty is rendered more urgent by the depraving tendency of our political connections and agitations. It has been said much too sweepingly, but with some approximation to truth, that in this country we have hosts of politicians, but no statesmen ; meaning, by the latter term, men of comprehensive, far-reaching views, who study the permanent good of the community, and hold fast under all changes to the great principles on which its salvation rests. The generality of our public men are mere politicians, purblind to the future, fevered by the present, merging patriotism in party spirit, intent on carrying a vote or election, no matter what means they use or what precedents they establish, and holding themselves absolved from a strict morality in public affairs. A principal object of political tactics is to conciliate and gain over to one or another side the most important interests of the country ; and of consequence the slave interest is propitiated with no small care. No party can afford to lose the South. The master's vote is too precious to be hazarded by sympathy with the slaves. Ac-

cordingly, parties and office-seekers wash their hands of abolitionism as if it were treason, and without committing themselves to slavery, protest their innocence of hostility to it. How far they would bow to the slave power, were the success of a great election to depend on soothing it, cannot be foretold, especially since we have seen the party, most jealous of popular rights, surrendering to this power the right of petition. In this state of things the slave-holding interest has the floor of Congress very much to itself. Now and then a man of moral heroism meets it with erect front, and a tone of conscious superiority. But political life does not abound in men of heroic mould. Military heroes may be found in swarms. Thousands die fearlessly on the field of battle, or the field of "honor." But the moral courage, which can stand cold looks, frowns, and contempt, which asks counsel of higher oracles than people or rulers, and cheerfully gives up preferment to a just cause, is rare enough to be canonized. In such a country the tendency to corruption of moral sentiment in regard to slavery, is strong. Many are tempted to acquiescence in it; and of consequence the good man, the friend of humanity and his country, should meet the danger by strong, uncompromising reprobation of this great wrong.

I would close this topic with observing, that there

is one portion of the community, to which I would especially commend the cause of the enslaved, and the duty of open testimony against this form of oppression; and that is, our women. To them above all others, slavery should seem an intolerable evil, because its chief victims are women. In their own country, and not very far from them, there are great multitudes of their sex exposed to dishonor, held as property by *man*, unprotected by law, driven to the field by the overseer, and happy if not consigned to infinitely baser uses, denied the rights of wife and mother, and liable to be stript of husband and child when another's pleasure or interest may so determine. Such is the lot of hundreds of thousands of their sisters; and is there nothing here to stir up woman's sympathy, nothing for her to remember when she approaches God's throne or opens her heart to her fellow creatures? Woman should talk of the enslaved to her husband, and do what she can to awaken, amongst his ever thronging worldly cares, some manly indignation, some interest in human freedom. She should breathe into her son a deep sense of the wrongs which man inflicts on man, and send him forth from her arms, a friend of the weak and injured. She should look on her daughter, and shudder at the doom of so many daughters on her own shores. When she meets with woman, she should talk with her of the ten

thousand homes which have no defence against licentiousness, against violation of the most sacred domestic ties; and through her whole intercourse, the fit season should be chosen to give strength to that deep moral conviction which can alone overcome this tremendous evil.

I know it will be said, that in thus doing, woman will wander beyond her sphere, and forsake her proper work. What! Do I hear such language in a civilized age, and in a land of Christians. What, let me ask, is woman's work? It is to be a minister of Christian love. It is to sympathize with human misery. It is to breathe sympathy into man's heart. It is to keep alive in society some feeling of human brotherhood. This is her mission on earth. Woman's sphere, I am told, is home. And why is home instituted? Why are domestic relations ordained? These relations are for a day; they cease at the grave. And what is their great end? To nourish a love which will endure forever, to awaken universal sympathy. Our ties to our parents are to bind us to the Universal Parent. Our fraternal bonds to help us to see in all men our brethren. Home is to be a nursery of Christians; and what is the end of Christianity but to awaken in all souls the principles of universal justice and universal charity. At home we are to learn to love our neighbor, our enemy, the stranger, the poor, the oppressed. If

home do not train us to this, then it is wofully perverted. If home counteract and quench the spirit of Christianity, then we must remember the Divine Teacher, who commands us to forsake father and mother, brother and sister, wife and child, for His sake, and for the sake of his truth. If the walls of home are the bulwarks of a narrow, clannish love, through which the cry of human miseries and wrongs cannot penetrate, then it is mockery to talk of their sacredness. Domestic life is at present too much in hostility to the spirit of Christ. A family should be a community of dear friends, strengthening one another for the service of their fellow creatures. Can we give the name of Christian to most of our families? Can we give it to women, who have no thoughts, or sympathies for multitudes of their own sex, distant only two or three days' journey from their doors, and exposed to outrages, from which they would pray to have their own daughters snatched, though it were by death.

Having spoken of the individual, I proceed to speak of the duties of the Free States, in their political capacity, in regard to slavery ; and these may be reduced to two heads, both of them negative. The first is, to abstain as rigidly from the use of political power against slavery in the States where it

is established, as from exercising it against slavery in foreign communities. The second is, to free ourselves from all obligation to use the powers of the national or state governments in any manner whatever for the support of slavery.

The first duty is clear. In regard to slavery, the Southern states stand on the ground of foreign communities. They are not subject or responsible to us more than these. No state-sovereignty can intermeddle with the institutions of another. We might as legitimately spread our legislation over the schools, churches, or persons of the South, as over their slaves. And in regard to the General Government, we know that it was not intended to confer any power, direct or indirect, on the free, over the slave states. Any pretension to such power on the part of the North, would have dissolved immediately the convention, which framed the constitution. Any act of the free states, when assembled in Congress, for the abolition of slavery in other states, would be a violation of the national compact, and would be just cause of complaint.

On this account I cannot but regret the disposition of a part of our abolitionists to organize themselves into a political party. Were it indeed their simple purpose to free the North from all obligation to give support to slavery, I should agree with them in their end, though not in their means. By look-

ing, as they do, to political organization, as a means of putting down the institution in other states, they lay themselves open to reproach. I know, indeed, that excellent men are engaged in this movement, and I acquit them of all disposition to transcend the limits of the Federal Constitution. But it is to be feared, that they may construe this instrument too literally ; that, forgetting its spirit, they may seek to use its powers for purposes very remote from its original design. Their failure is almost inevitable. By extending their agency beyond its true bounds, they ensure its defeat in its legitimate sphere. By assuming a political character, they lose the reputation of honest enthusiasts, and come to be considered as hypocritical seekers after place and power. Should they, in opposition to all probability, become a formidable party, they would unite the slaveholding states as one man ; and the South, always able, when so united, to link with itself a party at the North, would rule the country as before.

No association, like the abolitionists, formed for a particular end, can, by becoming a political organization, rise to power. If it can contrive to perpetuate itself, it will provoke contempt by the disproportion of its means to its ends ; but the probability is, that it will be swallowed up in the whirlpool of one or the other of the great national parties, from

whose fury hardly any thing escapes. These mighty forces sweep all lesser political organizations before them. And these are to be robbed of their pernicious power, not by forming a third party, but by the increase of intelligence and virtue in the community, and by the silent flowing together of reflecting, upright, independent men, who will feel themselves bound to throw off the shackles of party; who will refuse any longer to neutralise their moral influence by coalition with the self-seeking, the hollow-hearted, and the double-tongued; whose bond of union will be, the solemn purpose to speak the truth without adulteration, to adhere to the right without compromise, to support good measures and discountenance bad, come from what quarter they may, to be just to all parties, and to expose alike the corruptions of all. There are now among us good and true men enough to turn the balance on all great questions, would they but confide in principle, and be loyal to it in word and deed. Under their influence, newspapers might be established, in which men and measures of all parties would be tried without fear or favor by the moral, Christian law; and this revolution of the press would do more than all things for the political regeneration of the country. The people would learn from it, that whilst boasting of liberty, they are used as puppets and tools; that popular sove-

reignty, with all its paper bulwarks, is a show rather than a substance, as long as party despotism endures. It is by such a broad, generous improvement of society, that our present political organizations are to be put down, and not by a third party on a narrow basis, and which, instead of embracing all the interests of the country, confines itself to a single point.

I cannot but express again regret at the willingness of the abolitionists to rely on and pursue political power. Their strength has always lain in the simplicity of their religious trust, in their confidence in Christian truth. Formerly, the hope sometimes crossed my mind, that, by enlarging their views and purifying their spirit, they would gradually become a religious community, founded on the recognition of God as the common, equal Father of all mankind, on the recognition of Jesus Christ as having lived and died to unite to himself and to baptise with his spirit every human soul, and on the recognition of the brotherhood of all the members of God's human family. There are signs that Christians are tending, however slowly, toward a church, in which these great ideas of Christianity will be realized ; in which a spiritual reverence for God, and for the human soul, will take place of the customary homage paid to outward distinctions ; and in which our present narrow sects will be swallowed up.

I thought, that I saw in the principles with which the abolitionists started, a struggling of the human mind toward this Christian union. It is truly a disappointment to see so many of their number becoming a political party, an association almost always corrupting, and most justly suspected on account of the sacrifices of truth, and honor, and moral independence, which it extorts even from well-disposed men. Their proper work is to act on all parties, to support each as far as it shall be true to human rights, to gather laborers for the good cause from all bodies, civil and religious, and to hold forth this cause as a universal interest, and not as the property or stepping stone of a narrow association.

I know that it is said, that nothing but this political action can put down slavery. Then slavery must continue; and if we faithfully do our part as Christians, we are not responsible for its continuance. We are not to feel, as if we were bound to put it down by any and every means. We do not speak as Christians, when we say that slavery *must* and *shall* fall. Who are we to dictate thus to omnipotence? It has pleased the mysterious providence of God, that terrible evils should be left to overshadow the earth for ages. "How long O Lord!" has been the secret cry extorted from good men by the crimes of the world for six thousand years. On the philanthropist of this age, the same sad burden

is laid, and it cannot be removed. We must not feel, that were slavery destroyed, paradise would be restored. As in our own souls the conquest of one evil passion reveals to us new spiritual foes, so in society, one great evil hides in its shadow others perhaps as fearful, and its fall only summons us to new efforts for the redemption of the race. We know indeed, that good is to triumph over evil in this world; that "Christ must reign, till he shall put all enemies beneath his feet," or until his Spirit shall triumph over the spirit, oppressions, corruptions of the world. Let us then work against all wrong, but with a calm, solemn earnestness, not with vehemence and tumult. Let us work with deep reverence and filial trust toward God, and not in the proud impetuosity of our own wills. Happy the day, when such laborers shall be gathered by an inward attraction into one church or brotherhood, whose badge, creed, spirit, shall be Universal Love. This will be the true kingdom of God on earth, and its might will infinitely transcend political power.

For one, I have no desire to force Emancipation on the South. Had I political power, I should fear to use it in such a cause. A forced Emancipation is, on the whole, working well in the West Indies, because the mother country watches over and guides it, and pours in abundantly moral and religious influences to calm, and enlighten, and soften the minds

newly set free. Here no such control can be exercised. Freedom at the South, to work well, must be the gift of the masters. Emancipation must be their own act and deed. It must spring from goodwill and sense of justice, or at least from a sense of interest, and not be extorted by a foreign power; and with this origin, it will be more successful even than the experiment in the West Indies. In those islands, especially in Jamaica, the want of cordial co-operation on the part of the planters has continually obstructed the beneficial working of freedom, and still throws a doubtfulness over its complete success.

I have said, that the free States cannot rightfully use the power of their own legislatures or of Congress, to abolish slavery in the States where it is established. Their first duty is to abstain from such acts. Their next and more solemn duty is to abstain from all action for the support of slavery. If they are not to subvert much less are they to sustain it. There is some excuse for communities, when, under a generous impulse, they espouse the cause of the oppressed in other states, and by force restore their rights; but they are without excuse in aiding other states in binding on men an unrighteous yoke. On this subject, our fathers, in framing the constitution, swerved from the right. We, their

children, at the end of half a century, see the path of duty more clearly than they, and must walk in it. To this point the public mind has long been tending, and the time has come for looking at it fully, dispassionately, and with manly and Christian resolution. This is not a question of Abolitionism. It has nothing to do with putting down slavery. We are simply called as communities, to withhold support from it, to stand aloof, to break off all connection with this criminal institution. The free States ought to say to the South, "Slavery is yours not ours, and on you the whole responsibility of it must fall. We wash our hands of it wholly. We shall exert no power against it; but do not call on us to put forth the least power in its behalf. We cannot, directly or indirectly, become accessories to this wrong. We cannot become jailers, or a patrol, or a watch, to keep your slaves under the yoke. You must guard them yourselves. If they escape, we cannot send them back. Our soil makes whoever touches it, free. On this point you must manage your own concerns. You must guard your own frontier. In case of insurrection we cannot come to you, save as friends alike of bond and free. Neither in our separate legislatures, nor in the national legislature, can we touch slavery to sustain it. On this point you are foreign communities. You have often said, that you need not our protection; and we must take you at your word. In so

doing we have no thought of acting on your fears. We think only of our duty, and this, in all circumstances, and at all hazards, must be done."

The people of the North think but little of the extent of the support given to slavery by the Federal Government; though, when it is considered that "the slave-holding interest has a representation in Congress of *twenty-five* members, in *addition* to the fair and equal representation of the free inhabitants," it is very natural to expect the exercise of the powers of Congress in behalf of this institution. The Federal Government has been and is the friend of the slave-holder, and the enemy of the slave. It authorizes the former to seize, in a free state, a colored man, on the ground of being a fugitive, and to bring him before a justice of peace of his own selection; and this magistrate, without a jury, or without obligation to receive any testimony but what the professed master offers, can deliver up the accused, to be held as property for life. The Federal Government authorizes not only the apprehension and imprisonment, in the District of Columbia, of a negro suspected of being a runaway, but the sale of him as a slave, if within a certain time he cannot prove his freedom. It sustains slavery within the District of Columbia, though "under its exclusive jurisdiction," and allows this district to be one of the chief slave-marts of the country. Not a

slave auction is held there, but by the authority of Congress. The Federal Government has endeavored to obtain, by negotiation, the restoration of fugitive slaves who have sought and found freedom in Canada, and has offered in return to restore fugitives from the West Indies. It has disgraced itself in the sight of all Europe, by claiming as property slaves, who have been shipwrecked on the British islands, and who by touching British soil had become free. It has instructed its representative at Madrid, to announce to the Spanish court, "that the Emancipation of the slave population of Cuba would be very severely felt in the adjacent shores of the United States." It has purchased a vast unsettled territory, which it has given up to be overrun with slavery. To crown all, it has, in violation of the constitution, and of the right granted even by despotism to its subjects, refused to listen to petitions against these abuses of power. After all this humbling experience, is it not time for the free States to pause, to reflect, to weigh well what they are doing through the national government, and to resolve that they will free themselves from every obligation to uphold an institution which they know to be unjust.*

* On the subject of this paragraph, the reader will do well to consult "A View of the Action of the Federal Government in behalf of Slavery, by William Jay." The author is a son of Chief Justice Jay, and a worthy representative of the spirit and principles of his illustrious father.

The object now proposed, is to be effected by amendments of the constitution, and these should be sought in good faith ; that is, not as the means of abolishing slavery, but as a means of removing us from a participation of its guilt. The free States should take the high ground of duty ; and to raise them to this height, the press, the pulpit, and all religious and upright men should join their powers. A people under so pure an impulse, cannot fail. Such arrangements should be made, that the word slavery need not be heard again in Congress or in the local legislatures. On the principle now laid down, the question of abolition in the District of Columbia should be settled. Emancipation at the seat of Government ought to be insisted on, not for the purpose of influencing slavery elsewhere, but because what is done there is done by the whole people, because slavery sustained there is sustained by the free States. It is said, that the will of the citizens of the District is to be consulted. Were this true, which cannot be granted, the difficulty may easily be surmounted. Let Congress resolve to establish itself where it will have no slavery to control or uphold, and the people of the District of Columbia will remove the obstacle to its continuance where it is, as fast as can be desired.

The great difficulty in the way of the arrangement now proposed, is the article of the constitu-

tion requiring the surrender and return of fugitive slaves. A State, obeying this, seems to me to contract as great guilt as if it were to bring slaves from Africa. No man, who regards slavery as among the greatest wrongs, can in any way reduce his fellow creatures to it. The flying slave asserts the first right of a man, and should meet aid rather than obstruction. Who that has the heart of a freeman, or breathes the love of a Christian, can send him back to his chain? On this point, however, the difficulty of an arrangement is every day growing less. This provision of the constitution is undergoing a silent repeal, and no human power can sustain it. Just in proportion as slavery becomes the object of conscientious reprobation in the free States, just so fast the difficulty of sending back the fugitive increases. In the part of the country where I reside, it is next to impossible that the slave, who has reached us, should be restored to bondage. Not that our courts of law are obstructed; not that mobs would rescue the fugitive from the magistrate. We respect the public authorities. Not an arm would be raised against the officers of justice. But what are laws against the moral sense of a community? No man among us, who values his character, would aid the slave hunter. The slave hunter here would be looked on with as little favor as the felonious slave trader. Those among us, who dread to

touch slavery in its own region, lest insurrection and tumults should follow change, still feel, that the fugitive who has sought shelter so far, can breed no tumult in the land which he has left, and that, of consequence, no motive but the unhallowed love of gain can prompt to his pursuit; and when they think of slavery as perpetuated, not for public order, but for gain, they abhor it, and would not lift a finger to replace the flying bondsman beneath the yoke. Thus this provision of the constitution is virtually fading away; and, as I have said, no human power can restore it. The moral sentiment of a community is not to be withstood. Make as many constitutions as you will; fence round your laws with what penalties you will, the universal conscience makes them as weak as the threats of childhood. There is a spirit spreading through the country in regard to slavery, which demands changes of the constitution, and which will master it if it cannot change it. No concerted opposition to this instrument is thought of or is needed. No secret understanding among our citizens is to be feared at the South. The simple presence to their minds of the great truth, that man cannot rightfully be the property of man, is enough to shelter the slave. With this conviction we are palsy-stricken, when called upon to restore him to bondage. Our sinews are relaxed; our hands hang down; our limbs will not

carry us a step. Now this conviction is spreading, and will become the established principle of the free States. Politicians, indeed, to answer a party end, may talk of property in man, as something established or not to be questioned ; but the people at large do not follow them. The people go with the civilized and Christian world. The South should understand this, should look the difficulty in the face ; and they will see that, from the nature of the case, resistance is idle, that neither policy nor violence can avail. And, what is more, they have no right to reproach us with letting this provision of the constitution die among us. *They* have done worse. *We* are passive. *They* have actively, openly, flagrantly violated the constitution. They have passed laws, threatening to imprison and punish the free colored citizens of the North for exercising the rights guaranteed to every citizen by the national compact, i. e. for setting foot on their shores and using their highways. This wrong has been too patiently borne ; and in one way we can turn it to good account. When reproached with unfaithfulness to the constitution, we can hold it up as our shield, and cite the greater disloyalty of the South as an extenuation of our own.

It is best, however, that neither party should be unfaithful. It is best that both, enlightened as to the spirit of our times, should make new arrange-

ments to prevent collision, to define the duties of each and all, to bring the constitution into harmony with the moral convictions and with the safety of North and South. Until some such arrangements are made, perpetual collisions between the two great sections of our country must occur. Notwithstanding the tendencies to a low tone of thought and feeling at the North in regard to slavery, there is a decided increase of moral sensibility on the subject ; and in proportion as this shall spread, the free States will insist more strenuously on being released from every obligation to give support to what they deliberately condemn.

This liberation of the free States from all connection with and action on slavery, would indeed be an immense boon, and the removal of much dissension. Still, the root of bitterness would remain among us. Still, our union, that inestimable political good, will be insecure. Slavery, whilst it continues, must secretly, if not openly, mix with our policy, sow jealousies, determine the character of parties, and create, if not diversities of interests, at least suspicions of them, which may prove not a whit the less ruinous, because groundless.

Slavery is unfriendly to union, as it is directly hostile to the fundamental principle on which all our institutions rest. No nation can admit an element at war with its vital, central law, without losing some-

thing of its stability. The idea of Human Rights is the grand distinction of our country. Our chief boast as a people is found in the fact, that the toils, sacrifices, heroic deeds of our fathers, had for their end the establishment of these. Here is the unity which sums up our history, the glory which lights up our land, the chief foundation of the sentiment of loyalty, the chief spring of national feeling, the grand bond of national union ; and whatever among us is at war with this principle, weakens the living force which holds us together.

On this topic I cannot enlarge. But recent events compel me to refer to one influence more, by which slavery is unfriendly to union. It aggravates those traits of character at the South, which tend to division. It inflames that proud, fiery spirit, which is quick to take offence, and which rushes into rash and reckless courses. This ungoverned violence of feeling breaks out especially in Congress, the centre from which impulses are communicated to the whole people. It is a painful thought, that if any spot in the country is pre-eminent for rudeness and fierceness, it is the Hall of Representatives. Too many of our legislators seem to lay down at its door the common restraints of good society and the character of gentlemen. The national chamber seems liable to become a national nuisance ; and, although all parts of the country

are in a measure responsible for this wound inflicted on the honor and union of the country, we do feel, that the evil is to be imputed chiefly to the proud, impetuous temper of the South. It is believed, that the personal violences, which, if repeated, will reduce the national council to the level of a boxing match, may be traced to that part of the country. This evil is too notorious to be softened down by apologies or explanations; nor is it less an evil because precedents and parallels can be found in the legislative bodies of France and England. It tends not merely to spread barbarism through the community, but to impair the authority of legislation, to give new ferocity to the conflicts of party, and thus to weaken the national tie.

If slavery, that brand of discord, were taken away, the peculiarities of Northern and Southern character would threaten little or no evil to the Union. On the contrary, these two grand divisions of the country, now estranged from each other, would be brought near, and, by acting on and modifying one another, would produce a national character of the highest order. The South, with more of ardor and of bold and rapid genius, and the North, with more of wisdom and steady principle, furnish admirable materials for a State. Nor is the union of these to a considerable degree impracticable. It is worthy of remark, that the most eminent men at the South

have had a large infusion of the Northern character. Washington, in his calm dignity, his rigid order, his close attention to business, his reserve almost approaching coldness, bore a striking affinity to the North ; and his sympathies led him to choose Northern men very much as his confidential friends. Mr. Madison had much of the calm wisdom, the patient, studious research, the exactness and quiet manner of our part of the country, with little of the imagination and fervor of his own. Chief Justice Marshall had more, than these two great men, of the genial unreserved character of a warmer climate, but so blended with a spirit of moderation, and clear judgment, and serene wisdom, as to make him the delight and confidence of the whole land. There is one other distinguished name of the South, which I have not mentioned, Mr. Jefferson ; and the reason is, that his character seemed to belong to neither section of the country. He wanted the fiery, daring spirit of the South, and the calm energy of the North. He stood alone. He was a man of genius, given to bold, original, and somewhat visionary speculation, and at the same time, a sagacious observer of men and events. He owed his vast influence, second only to Washington's, to his keen insight into the character of his countrymen and into the spirit of his age. His opponents have set him down as the most unscrupulous of politicians ; but

one merit, and no mean one, must be accorded to him, that of having adopted early, and of having held fast through life, the most generous theory of Human Rights, and of having protested against slavery, as an aggravated wrong. In truth, it is impossible to study the great men of the South, and to consider the force of intellect and character which that region has developed, without feelings of respect, and without the most ardent desire that it may free itself by any means from an institution, which aggravates what is evil and threatening in its character, which cripples it of much of its energy, which cuts it off from the sympathies and honor of the civilized world, and which prevents it from a true cordial union with the rest of the country. It is slavery which prevents the two sections of country from acting on and modifying each other for the good of both. This is the great gulph between us, and constantly growing wider and deeper in proportion to the spread of moral feeling, of Christian philanthropy, of respect for men's rights, of interest in the oppressed.

Why is it, that slavery is not thrown off? We here ascribe its continuance very much to cupidity and love of power. But there is another cause which is certainly disappearing. Slavery at the South continues, in part, in consequence of that want of activity, of steady force, of resolute industry among the free white population, which it has itself produced. A

people with force enough to attempt a social revolution, and to bear its first inconveniences, would not endure slavery. We of the North, with our characteristic energy, would hardly tolerate it a year. The sluggishness, stupidity of the slaves would keep us in perpetual irritation. We should run over them, tread them almost unconsciously under foot, in our haste and eagerness to accomplish our enterprizes. We should feel the wastefulness of slave labor, in comparison with free. The clumsy mechanic, the lagging house-servant, the slovenly laborer ever ready with a lying excuse, would be too much for our patience. Now there is reason to think, that the stirring, earnest, industrious spirit of the North, is finding its way Southward; and with this, a desire to introduce better social relations can hardly be repressed.

We believe, too, that this revolution would be hastened, if the South would open its ear to the working of Emancipation in other countries, and to the deep interest in the African race which is now spreading through the world. On these subjects very little is yet known at the South. The newspapers there spread absurd rumors of the failure of the experiment of the West Indies, but the truth finds no organs. We doubt, too, whether one newspaper has even made a reference to the recent public meeting in England for the civilization of Africa, the

one merit, and no mean one, must be accorded to him, that of having adopted early, and of having held fast through life, the most generous theory of Human Rights, and of having protested against slavery, as an aggravated wrong. In truth, it is impossible to study the great men of the South, and to consider the force of intellect and character which that region has developed, without feelings of respect, and without the most ardent desire that it may free itself by any means from an institution, which aggravates what is evil and threatening in its character, which cripples it of much of its energy, which cuts it off from the sympathies and honor of the civilized world, and which prevents it from a true cordial union with the rest of the country. It is slavery which prevents the two sections of country from acting on and modifying each other for the good of both. This is the great gulph between us, and constantly growing wider and deeper in proportion to the spread of moral feeling, of Christian philanthropy, of respect for men's rights, of interest in the oppressed.

Why is it, that slavery is not thrown off? We here ascribe its continuance very much to cupidity and love of power. But there is another cause which is certainly disappearing. Slavery at the South continues, in part, in consequence of that want of activity, of steady force, of resolute industry among the free white population, which it has itself produced. A

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tice and evils of this institution, and to the evidence of the benefits of Emancipation ; and if so, then the weight of guilt on this nation is great, and increasing. Our fathers carried on slavery in much blindness. They lived and walked under the shadow of a dark and bloody past. But the darkness is gone. The “mystery of iniquity” is now laid open. Slavery, from its birth to its last stage, is now brought to light. The wars, the sacked and burning villages, the kidnapping and murders of Africa, which begin this horrible history ; the crowded hold, the chains, stench, suffocation, burning thirst, and agonies of the slave ship ; the loathsome diseases and enormous waste of life in the middle passage ; the wrongs and sufferings of the plantation, with its reign of terror and force, its unbridled lust, its violations of domestic rights and charities—these all are revealed. The crimes and woes of slavery come to us in moans and shrieks from the old world and the new, and from the ocean which divides them ; and we are distinctly taught, that in no other calamity are such wrongs and miseries concentrated as in this. To put an end to some of these woes, the most powerful nations have endeavored, by force of laws and punishments, to abolish the slave trade ; but the trial has proved, that, while slavery endures, the traffic which ministers to it cannot be suppressed. At length the axe has been laid at the root of the accursed tree.

By the act of a great nation nearly a million of slaves have been Emancipated ; and the first results have exceeded the hopes of philanthropy. All this history of slavery is given to the world. The truth is brought to our very doors. And, still more, to *us*, above all people, God has made known those eternal principles of freedom, justice, and humanity, by which the full enormity of slavery may be comprehended. To shut our eyes against all this light ; to shut our ears and hearts against these monitions of God, these pleadings of humanity ; to stand forth, in this great conflict of good with evil, as the chief upholders of oppression ; to array ourselves against the efforts of the Christian and civilized world for the extinction of this greatest wrong ; to perpetuate it with obstinate madness where it exists, and to make new regions of the earth groan under its woes—this, surely, is a guilt which the justice of God cannot wink at, and on which insulted humanity, religion, and freedom call down fearful retribution.

On this page I have spoken of the manner in which the slaves in the West Indies received Emancipation. This great event took place on the first of August, 1834. The following account of the manner in which the preceding night was kept, is extracted from Thome and Kimball's book on the subject.

“The Wesleyans kept ‘watch-night’ in all their chapels on the night of the 31st July. One of the Wesleyan missionaries gave us an account of the watch meeting at the chapel in St. John’s. The spacious house was filled with the candidates for liberty. All was animation and eagerness. A mighty chorus of voices swelled the song of expectation and joy, and as they united in prayer, the voice of the leader was drowned in the universal acclamation of thanksgiving, and praise, and blessing, and honor, and glory, to God, who had come down for their deliverance. In such exercises the evening was spent until the hour of twelve approached. The missionary then proposed that when the clock on the cathedral should begin to strike, the whole congregation should fall upon their knees and receive the boon of freedom in silence. Accordingly, as the loud bell tolled its first note, the immense assembly fell prostrate on their knees. All was silence, save the quivering half-stifled breath of the struggling spirit. The slow notes of the clock fell upon the multitude; peal on peal, peal on peal, rolled over the prostrate throng, in tones of angels’ voices, thrilling among the desolate chords and weary heart-strings. Scarce had the clock sounded its last note, when the lightning flashed vividly around, and a loud peal of thunder roared along the sky—God’s pillar of fire, and trump of jubilee! A moment of profoundest silence passed—then came the *burst*—they broke forth in prayer; they shouted, they sung, ‘Glor-y,’ ‘alleluia;’ they clapped their hands, leaped up, fell down, clasped each other in their free arms, cri-

ed, laughed, and went to and fro, tossing upward their unfettered hands; but high above the whole there was a mighty sound which ever and anon swelled up; it was the utterings in broken negro dialect, of gratitude to God.

“After this gush of excitement had spent itself, and the congregation became calm, the religious exercises were resumed, and the remainder of the night was occupied in singing and prayer, in reading the Bible, and in addresses from the missionaries, explaining the nature of the freedom just received, and exhorting the free people to be industrious, steady, obedient to the laws, and to show themselves in all things worthy of the high boon which God had conferred upon them.”

NOTE—page 63.

On reading to a friend my remarks on the African character, he observed to me, that similar views had been taken by Alexander Kinmont, in his “Lectures on Man: Cincinnati, 1839.” This induced me to examine the lectures, and I had the satisfaction of finding not only a coincidence of opinions, but that the author had pursued the subject much more thoroughly and illustrated it with much strength and beauty. I would recommend this work to such as delight in bold and original thinking. The reader, indeed, will often question the soundness of the author’s conclusions; but even in these cases, the mind will be waked up to great and interesting subjects of reflection. I will subjoin a few extracts relating to the African character.

“When the epoch of the civilization of the Negro family arrives, in the lapse of ages, they will display in their native land some very peculiar and interesting traits of character, of which we, a distinct branch of the human family, can at present form no conception. It will be,—indeed it must be,—a civilization

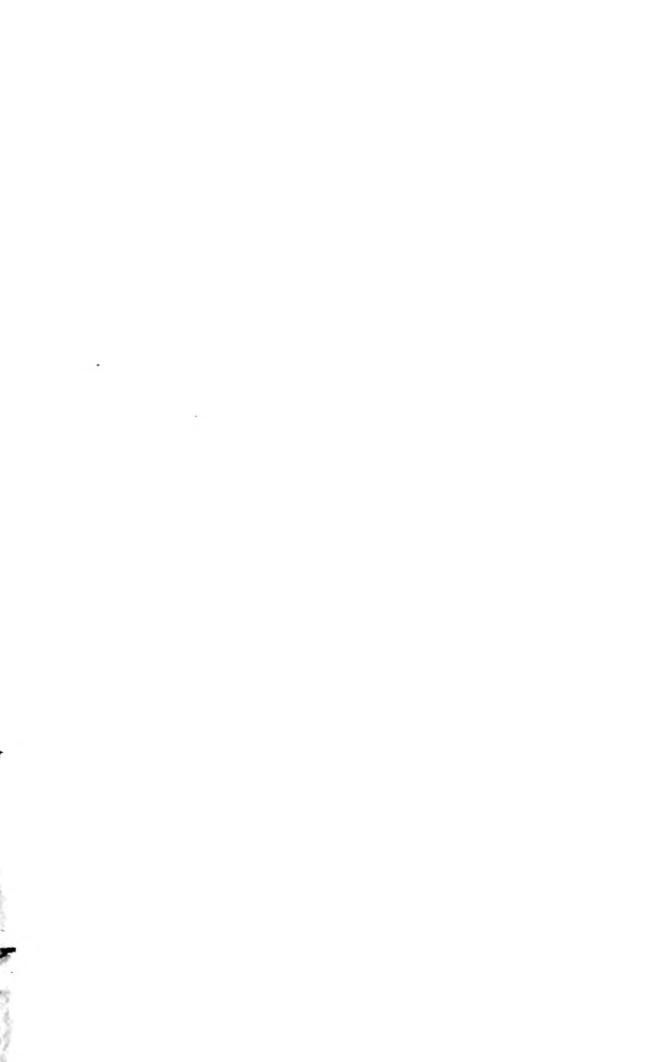
of a peculiar stamp; perhaps, we might venture to conjecture, not so much distinguished by art as a certain beautiful nature, not so marked or adorned by science, as exalted and refined by a new and lovely theology;—a reflection of the light of heaven, more perfect and endearing than that which the intellects of the Caucasian race have ever yet exhibited. There is more of the *child*, of unsophisticated nature, in the Negro race than in the European.”—p. 190.

“The peninsula of Africa is the home of the Negro and the appropriate and destined seat of his future glory and civilization,—a civilization which we need not fear to predict will be as distinct in all its features from that of all other races, as his complexion and natural temperament and genius are different. But who can doubt that here, also, humanity in its more advanced and millennial stage will reflect, under a sweet and mellow light, the softer attributes of the divine beneficence. If the Caucasian race is destined as would appear from the precocity of their genius and their natural quickness and extreme aptitude to the arts, to reflect the lustre of the divine wisdom, or to speak more properly, the divine science, shall we envy the Negro if a later but far nobler civilization await him,—to return the splendor of the divine attributes of mercy and benevolence in the practice and exhibition of all the milder and gentler virtues?”—p. 191.

“If there are fewer vivid manifestations of intellect in the Negro family than in the Caucasian, as I am disposed to believe, does that forbid the hope of the return of that pure and gentle state of society among them which attracts the peculiar regard of heaven?”—p. 192.

“The sweeter graces of the Christian religion appear almost too tropical and tender plants to grow in the soil of the Caucasian mind; they require a character of human nature, of which you can see the rude lineaments in the Ethiopian, to be implanted in and grow naturally and beautifully withal.”—p. 218.





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